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The Arguments Of The Books and Chapters Of The New Testament With
Practical Observations

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ARGUMENT

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A R G U M E N T S
O F T H E
B o o k s a n d C h a p t e r s
O F T H E
N E W T E S T A M E N T,
With Practical Observations.

Translated from the Original Manuscript of the Reverend and Learned Mr. O S T E R V A L D, Professor of Divinity, and one of the Ministers of Neufchatel in Swisserland,

(By JOHN CHAMBERLAYNE, Esq;



L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by J. Downing, in Bartholomew-Close near West-Smithfield, 1718.

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Translated from the Original Manuscript of the Reverend and Learned Mr. OSTERVALD, Professor of Divinity, and one of the Ministers of Amsterdam in Holland.

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TO HER
ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCESS
ANN E, &c.

MADAM,

THE Treatise which
I presume to lay at
the Feet of your
Royal Highness, consists
of an Enumeration of the

The Dedication.

Arguments of the Books and Chapters in the New-Testament, accompanied with Theological and Moral Reflexions upon all of them. It was compiled by that Eminent Divine Mr. *Ostervald*, at the Request of a SOCIETY, that has distinguish'd it self by the most worthy of all Purposes, the Endeavour of PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. The Work could hardly have a greater Recommendation than that of such an Assembly; but I can name a still higher Advantage to it, the Approbation of your Illustrious Mother.

That

The Dedication.

That it may be useful to
your Highness, and your
Sisters, by forwarding you
in the Imitation of Her
Christian and Royal Vir-
tues and Accomplish-
ments, is the most sincere
and constant Prayers of,

M A D A M,

Your Royal Highness's

Most Humble, and

Most Obedient Servant,

John Chamberlayne.

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THE
ARGUMENTS
OF THE
Books and Chapters
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT:

With practical Observations.



St. *Matthew*.

CHAP. I.



IN this Gospel we have the History of the Birth of our Lord, of his Life, of his Death, of his Resurrection, and of his Ascension into Heaven. This is the first of the Four Gospels; it was writ by the Apostle St. *Matthew*, about eight Years (as it is thought) after that *Jesus Christ* had

had left this World. In the first Chapter of this Gospel we see, I. The Genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, from *Abraham* down to *Joseph*, the Husband of the blessed Virgin. II. A short Relation of the Conception and Birth of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IT is our Duty, not only to hearken always with great Attention and Reverence to the Reading of the Gospel, but to read it our selves, and to meditate upon it continually, and to make the utmost Advantage we can of the Instructions contain'd in it. I. The Genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, which is recited in the first Chapter of *St. Matthew*, shews that He is descended from the Patriarch *Abraham*, and from King *David*, as was foretold by the Prophets. And II. The History of his Conception and his Birth, teaches us that he was born of the Virgin *Mary* after a wonderful manner, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to what had been said formerly by the Prophet *Isaiah*: Both these Things prove that *Jesus* is the Messiah whom God had promised to send, and that it was in Him that the Promises of God, and the Prophecies of the Old Testament, have had their Accomplishment; this obliges us to receive his Doctrine, to obey Him, and to render Thanks to God for having given us his only Son for our Redeemer, *Which was made of the Seed of David according to the Flesh*, Rom. i. 3. *And who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.* Rom. ix. 5.

C H A P. II.

THIS Chapter contains Four Things. I. The Arrival of the Wise-Men of the *East* that came to worship *Jesus* after he was Born. II. The Retreat of *Joseph* and *Mary*, who fled into *Egypt* with the Child *Jesus*, to avoid the Rage of *Herod*. III. The Slaughter of the Children of *Bethlehem*, whom *Herod* caused to be Murthered, hoping to destroy our Lord among them. IV. The Return of *Joseph* and *Mary* to *Judea*, after the Death of *Herod*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E S E are the Observations that may be made upon this Chapter. I. The first is, that the Wise Men came from a far Country to worship *Jesus* after his Birth, and that they were guided towards Him by a miraculous Star; God was pleased thereby to render that Birth illustrious, and to shew the Dignity of the Person of our Lord; it likewise denoted that the Gentiles were about to be called to the Knowledge of Him. II. The Homage which these Wise Men of the *East* performed to *Jesus Christ*, and the Gifts they presented to Him, should excite us that know He is our God, and our Saviour, to worship Him, to offer up to Him our Prayers, our Praises, and our Hearts, and in general, to devote to Him all that is in our Power. III. We see in the Behaviour of *Herod* towards the Wise Men, and in the Massacre which he made of the Children of *Bethlehem*, the Craft and Cruelty of that Prince; we may farther observe from thence, that our Saviour was exposed, even from his Birth, to great Perils,

rils, which shews, that his *Kingdom* was not of *this World*, and that He was Born for Sufferings; but we may likewise take notice, that God, by the Warnings which He gave to the Wise Men, and afterwards to *Joseph*, defeated *Herod's* Designs, and that all the Measures which that unjust and cruel Prince had taken to destroy *Jesus*, as sure as he thought them, and as they appear'd to be, could not prevent our Lord from being saved alive, nor from returning into *Judea*, where He afterwards exercis'd his Ministry. All these Events may convince us, that Providence did direct, after a particular manner, all that happen'd to *Jesus Christ*, and that the utmost Endeavours of Men, can never hinder the Execution of the Designs of God, nor hurt those whom He protects.

C H A P. III.

THIS Chapter consists of Two Parts, I. In the First, mention is made of the Preaching and Ministry of *John* the Baptist. And, II. In the Second, the Evangelist relates the History of the Baptism of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we are to observe in general upon the first Part of this Chapter is, that before the Appearance of *Jesus Christ*, *John* the Baptist, according to what the Prophets had foretold, was sent from God to declare to the *Jews* the Coming of the Messiah, and to exhort them to Repentance; by which, God was pleased to teach them, that the Kingdom of the Messiah, which they expected, was about to be manifested, but that it would be a Spiritual and Heavenly Kingdom, and not a Temporal or worldly

worldly one, as they imagined ; which was very necessary to dispose the *Jews* to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and to receive his Doctrine. The Preaching of *John* the Baptist teaches us, that Repentance and Holiness of Life, is a Qualification, without which one cannot be the Disciple of *Jesus Christ*, nor enter into the Kingdom of God. It likewise informs us, that as the unbelieving *Jews* vainly boasted, that they were the Children of *Abraham*, it is no Advantage to Hypocrites to be externally in the divine Covenant ; that *Jesus Christ* discerns them, and knows them, and that He will one Day cleanse his Church, by casting the Wicked into everlasting Fire, and by receiving the truly Faithful into his Kingdom. II. As for what relates to the Baptism of our Lord, it must be observ'd, that when He was about to enter upon the Discharge of his Office, He was Baptized by St. *John* his Forerunner ; that upon this Occasion, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in a visible Manner, and that God caused a Voice to be heard from Heaven, whereby He declared that *Jesus* was his beloved Son. God was pleased that all these Things should happen, to shew both to *John* the Baptist, and to all the World, that *Jesus* was the promised Messiah : Thus the History of his Baptism obliges us to consider Him as the Son of God, to hearken only to Him, and to render Him an inviolable Obedience. It likewise engages us to reverence the Baptism we have received, and by which we have been devoted to God, to be his Children, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

C H A P. IV.

ST. *Matthew* here relates, I. The History of the Temptation of *Jesus Christ*. II. The manner in which he began to exercise his Ministry in *Galilee*, by declaring that the Kingdom of God was come, by electing his Apostles, and by working Miracles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**T may be observ'd in general upon the History of the Temptation, that the Design of the Devil was to try, whether *Jesus* was the Son of God; and that it pleased God to suffer this Temptation, to the end that the Devil being convinc'd of that Truth, might Revere the Power of *Jesus Christ*; and to the end that it might appear, that our Lord was come into the World to destroy the Kingdom of *Satan*, upon which we ought to consider, that since *Jesus Christ* himself was tempted, we should not be surpris'd, if we also are exposed to various Temptations; but this History does likewise teach us, that we ought, after the Example of our Lord, to resist Temptations, and particularly such as will lead us into Distrust, or into Presumption and a wrong Confidence, or into the Love of Glory, and the good Things of this World; or lastly, such as may any ways tend to turn us from the true Service of God, and from that Faithfulness which we owe Him: And the Method which Christ made use of to repel the Temptations of *Satan*, by quoting the Holy Scriptures, shews us, that it is by Faith and the Word of God that we may defeat Temptations, and quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked one. II. When we read that *Jesus Christ* began to exercise his Ministry

stry in *Galilee*, by Preaching Repentance, as *John Baptist* had done, we ought from thence to acknowledge the Necessity of a good Life. That which is related in this Chapter, that our Lord chose Fishermen for his Apostles, proves, that the wonderful Success which their Preaching had afterwards, did not proceed from themselves, and that it is only to be ascribed to God, who endow'd them with his Gifts. *Lastly*, The wonderful Cures by which *Jesus* made himself known at first, tended to shew, that He was sent from God, and the Divinity of his Word, and that He came into the World only for the Good and Salvation of Mankind.

C H A P. V. 1,—20.

THIS Chapter, together with the two following, contains the Sermon that *Jesus Christ* made upon the Mount. In the beginning of this Sermon, our Lord does Two Things. I. He declares who those be whom we ought to look upon as Blessed. II. He speaks of the Obligations incumbent on his Disciples to live in great Holiness.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Sermon of our Lord, which is contained in the *Vth*, *VIth*, and *VIIth* Chapters of *St. Matthew*, ought to be continually read and meditated by Christians; the Design of *Jesus Christ* in general is, thereby to instruct us in the chief Duties of a Christian Life; for which Reason, we ought to listen to the Reading of those Chapters with great Application, and to regulate our Behaviour by the Divine Precepts we find therein. There are Two Reflexions that may be made upon what has been said. I. The Beatitudes teach us wherein the true Happiness

pineness of Man consists, and what are the Characters of the true Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, namely, not to set our Hearts upon Riches or Pleasures, or upon the Glory of this World; but to live in an Indifference for the Goods of Fortune, in Meekness, Humility, Holiness and Peace, and even joyfully to undergo Persecution for the sake of the Gospel. II. *Jesus Christ* has taught us, that his Disciples ought to distinguish themselves from other Men, by the Purity of their Lives, and endeavour to enlighten and edifie them by their Instructions and good Examples. He has also declared, that He was so far from coming into the World to dispense with the Observation of the Law of God, that, on the contrary, He came to excite Men more strongly to accomplish it, and that after the most perfect Manner; that those who should not exceed the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, (Persons that passed among the *Jews* for the most Knowing, and the most Holy,) would not deserve to be called his Disciples; and that He will receive into his Kingdom, none but such as shall keep his Commandments. The Effect which all these Precepts of our Lord ought to produce, is to make us comprehend the indispensable Obligation we lye under, to study to lead a holy Life, and even to aspire with all our Might to a high degree of Perfection.

C H A P. V. 21,—48.

JESUS CHRIST being desirous to shew that his Disciples are called to a great Holiness, teaches them that it is not sufficient to abstain from notorious Crimes, and such as are expressly condemned in the Law of God; but also, that those Sins which appear less considerable, are to be avoided, and above all, the
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Motions of the Heart to be regulated. In this View He recites, I. The Commandments concerning Murder. II. Adultery. III. Oaths. IV. Revenge. And, V. The Love of our Neighbour. He corrects the false Interpretations which the *Jews* put upon those Commandments, and gives us the true Notions of them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Explanation which our Lord gives to the chief Commandments of the Law, teaches us, that they are not only great Crimes, and crying Sins, which God prohibits, and which He punishes, but that He likewise condemns and corrects us for evil Thoughts, and evil Desires, which the *Jewish* Doctors considered only as light Faults: Besides this general and very important Lesson, Christ instructs us in these Four particular Duties. I. That Wrath, Hatred against one's Neighbour, injurious and contemptible Appellations, do subject us to Condemnation, as well as Murder, that far from hating any one, we ought to labour to have Peace with all Men; and that we should not allow our selves to come before God, and to offer Him our Prayers, without doing all that lies in our Power to be reconciled to those that have any thing against us. II. The second Duty relates to Purity and Chastity. Our Lord teaches us, that impure Desires render us Guilty before God, as much as the very Act of Adultery or Fornication; that in order to be Chast, we must watch over our Selves, mortifie our Senses, pluck out an Eye, cut off a Hand or Foot, that is to say, deprive our Selves of every thing that would be most dear and agreeable to us, if it should be any Occasion of Falling. He likewise teaches us, that the Bands of Marriage can-
not

not be dissolved but by Adultery. III. The third Instruction relates to Swearing; we find it is not sufficient to avoid Perjury, which is a very great Crime; but that we ought likewise to be scrupulous in breaking Oaths, tho' not made by the Name of God, and entirely to abstain from vain and rash Oaths, of what kind soever they be, since they are forbid by the Law of *Jesus Christ*, and contrary to that Reverence that is due to the Divinity. IV. The fourth Duty, is that of Charity, and the Love of our Neighbour. What Christ commands upon that Head is, to abstain from Revenge, to bear Injuries, rather than to return Evil for Evil; to Love all Men, even those that hate us, therein to imitate our Heavenly Father, who does good to all, even to the Wicked and Ungrateful: This is the Law of the Gospel, and of true Charity, and in the Practice of all these Duties, we shall find our Perfection and our Glory.

C A A P. VI. 1,—18.

OUR Lord speaks here, I. Of Alms. II. Of Prayer. III. Of Fasting. He shews how we must discharge those Religious Acts, and exhorts us above all to avoid Hypocrisie and Ostentation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS first Part of the *Sixth* Chapter of St. *Matthew* teaches us, I. That Alms, Prayer, and Fasting, are those Duties of Religion that ought not to be neglected; and as to Fasting in particular, we must take notice, that since Christ has prescribed Rules to us about the manner of Fasting, as well as about Prayer and Alms, his Design was, that his Disciples should
Fast,

Fast, not only upon solemn and publick Occasions, but likewise that they should perform those kinds of private Fasts which are here meant, they being very useful to mortifie the Flesh, and to dispose us for Humiliation and Prayer. II. We should infer from hence, that Hypocrisie and Vain-glory are to be most carefully avoided when we do our Charities, when we Pray, and when we Fast; and that we ought to discharge these Duties and all others with Sincerity and Humility, remembering that we are in the Presence of God, who sees all that passes in the most secret Corners of our Heart; and that Hypocrites, far from Reaping any Reward, have nothing to expect but most rigorous Punishment. III. We ought well to observe, that in order to teach his Disciples how to Pray, our Saviour gave them a Form, in that which is called the Lord's Prayer. Since that Prayer has *Jesus Christ* for its Author, and that it comprehends in few Words all that is necessary for the Glory of God and our own Happiness, the Use that we are to make of it is, *First*, To bring along with us great Reverence and Attention, Zeal, and Fervour, when we offer it to God: And in the *second* Place, to adapt, not only our Prayers, but likewise our Thoughts and Behaviour, to that excellent Pattern which Christ has left us. *Lastly*, Our Lord has declared to us most expressly, that we must not hope that God should hear and pardon us, if we do not likewise pardon all those that have offended us; concerning which we ought to examine our selves very strictly, as often as we come before God to beg his Grace, and to offer up our Prayers.

C H A P. VI. 19,—34.

JESUS CHRIST teaches his Disciples, that they must not take Pains to heap up worldly Riches, nor to be solicitous for the good Things of this Life; exhorts them to depend upon Providence, and before all Things to seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness,

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Design of our Lord in what has been read, is to teach us, That Christians ought not to set their Hearts upon worldly Things, nor too eagerly to hunt after the Possession thereof, but that they ought rather labour to acquire the good Things of the other World. He represents to us, that in this View, the Goods of this World are vain and uncertain, and that many Accidents may deprive us of them; whereas, the good Things of Heaven are most excellent, and nothing can take them from us. He tells us, in the next place, That it is very dangerous to love Riches, that such Love blinds us, and fastens our Inclinations to the Earth, and that it is not possible to serve God, to love Him, to have our Heart free and lifted up to Him, whilst we are entangled with the Love of the Goods of this Life. *Jesus Christ* does not only forbid us to love Riches, but even commands us not to be uneasy, or too solicitous for the Things that are necessary to support our Lives, exhorting us to trust in Providence, which, as it takes care for Birds, and other Creatures, will much more provide for the Wants

Wants of its own Children, who are of a more excellent Nature, and design'd for Immortality.

Our Saviour condemns those Temporal Cares which are excessive, and attended with Inquietude and Distrust, and He shews that such Cares are unprofitable, and besides, unworthy of Christians. *Lastly*, He exhorts us to endeavour above all Things to please God, and to attain the Kingdom of Heaven, promising us, that if we do so, God will grant us all Things necessary for the Life of the Body. Let us imprint in our Minds these Divine Lessons; let them always be present to us in the midst of our worldly Concerns, to the end that they may secure us from too strict a Union with them, and engage us chiefly to seek after the Eternal Goods, that are reserved for us in Heaven: God grant us this Grace.

Amen.

C H A P. VII. 1,—14.

OUR Lord Discourses here, I. Of rash Judgments; of the Discretion with which Truth ought to be proposed. II. Of Prayer, and its Efficacy; He prescribes Rules for Righteousness and Charity. And, III. exhorts us to enter in at the strait Gate.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains several weighty Instructions. I. The *First* is, not to judge rashly of our Neighbour, nor to blame him with too great Severity, but to acknowledge our own Faults, and to amend them, rather than pry too curiously into, and reprove the Faults of other Men. II. The *Second* is,
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not to cast holy Things to Dogs; this is a prudential Advice, the Meaning whereof is, That when we have to do with carnal and prophane Men, who proudly and contemptuously reject the Doctrine of the Gospel, we ought not to offer it to them, for fear of exposing Religion and Truth to their Contempt, and making them hate it, instead of loving it. III. Our Lord exhorts us to pray to God with Reliance upon Him, assuring us, that Prayer is of very great Efficacy, provided it be attended with Zeal and Perseverance, and that we ask of God those Things that are really Good; this He shews by the Comparifon between God and our natural Parents, who never deny their Children the Things that are necessary for them. IV. He gives us here the Rule of Justice and Charity, which is, to do by others, as we would have them do by us; this is a most perfect Rule, and at the same time, no less simple and plain, and we ought always to have it before our Eyes. V. *Lastly*, The Lord exhorts his Disciples to enter into the strait Gate, that is to say, to follow the Path of that Faith and Piety which leads to Salvation, notwithstanding that few People walk in the same Way, and that it is contrary to humane Passions and Inclinations, and even though it should sometimes expose us to Persecution; and He commands us to avoid the Paths of Error and Vice, which indeed are pleasing to Flesh and Blood, and wherein many People walk, but which leads them to Destruction.

C H A P. VII. 15,—29.

I. **C**H R I S T warns us against false Prophets. II. He declares, that not all who call Him their Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. III. And shews us by a Parable, that it is in vain to hear his Word, if we do not practise that which it teaches us.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Part of the *Seventh* Chapter of St. *Matthew*, our Lord, I. Bids us beware of Believing all Kinds of Doctrines and Teachers, and to avoid the false Prophets and Impostors that were among the *Jews*, and of whom they were to expect a greater Number afterwards. The Rule which He gives thereupon is, to judge them by their Fruits ; that is, by their Works and Behaviour, as well as by the Effects which their Doctrine may produce, taking notice whether it tends to the Glory of God, and to make Mankind better. II. After that, He formally declares, that all those who profess his Religion, and call Him their Lord, shall not enter into Heaven ; and that He will receive none but such as perform his Will ; and that many who have known him, who have preach'd his Gospel, and even wrought Miracles, shall be shut out of his Kingdom at the last Day, because they have not kept his Commandments. III. *Lastly*, He concludes this Discourse by the Comparifon of a House founded upon a Rock, with another built upon Sand ; by which He shews, that 'tis in vain to hear his Word, to endeavour to acquire the Knowledge of his Doctrine, and even to embrace
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the Profession thereof, if we do not observe that which He commands; and that those who fail in this essential Duty, can never persevere, nor resist Temptation. Thus we are taught by this Similitude, what use we ought to make of the Gospel, and particularly of this admirable Discourse or Sermon of our Saviour, which ends here. The Lord give us Grace to make a right Use of it, and to put in Practice the Divine Lessons contained therein.

C H A P. VIII. 1,—17.

ST. *Matthew* relates several Miracles of *Jesus Christ*. I. The Healing of a Leper. II. That of the Servant of a Gentile Captain. III. That of St. *Peter's* Mother in Law, and several other Distempers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

AS it is in this Chapter that the History of our Saviour's Miracles begins, the first Observation that we shall make, relates to those Miracles in general; we discover here, I. The infinite Power of our Lord, which appears by his Healing all Kinds of Diseases, and Performing all those wonderful Works by his Word only. II. His Goodness and Charity towards Men, those Miracles having been nothing else but Acts of Beneficence. III. We are to consider the Design of these Miracles, which is to convince Men that *Jesus* was sent from God, and to engage them to believe in Him; for which Reason the Miracles that He wrote, were commonly for the sake of such as believed He was able to do them. Besides these general Reflexions, which ought always to be present to our Minds when we read the Gospel,

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it is to be observed, that in the Cure of the Leper, our Lord had respect to his Faith and his Prayer; whereby we may see, that He saves and delivers those who have recourse to Him with Trust and Humility: And farther, if *Jesus Christ* order'd the Leper to go and shew himself to the High Priest, and to offer what was commanded by the Law, it was to the end the *Jews* might be convinced that he was quite cured, and that they might not accuse our Lord of being an Enemy to the Law of *Moses*. The Healing the Centurion's Servant is particularly remarkable, for the profound Humility, and admirable Faith of that Man, who did not think himself worthy to receive Christ into his House; and that, without coming to him, He needed only say the Word, and the Servant would be healed. The Praises which *Jesus Christ* gave to the Faith of that Officer, (who was born a Heathen,) saying, that He had not found such great Faith even among the *Jews*, oblige us to take great Notice of that Example, and to imitate the Faith and Humility of the Centurion. It is likewise observable, that *Jesus* foretold, upon this Occasion, that many should come from the East, and from the West, and sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Children of the Kingdom should be cast out; which was as much as to say, that the *Gentiles* should be admitted into the Divine Covenant and the *Jews* rejected; as was soon after verified by the Event. *Lastly*, We ought to hearken very carefully to what St. *Matthew* says about the Healing of St. *Peter's* Mother in Law, and several other sick Persons; namely, That our Lord wrought all these Miracles, to shew that He had taken upon Himself all our Infirmities and Diseases; the Meaning whereof is, He was a charitable

Saviour, and that He only came into the World to do good to Mankind; to deliver them from all their Miseries, and chiefly from their Sins.

C H A P. VIII. 18,—34.

WE see here *Three* Things. I. That which our Saviour said to one of the Scribes, and to a Disciple that desired to follow Him. II. The Miracle He did in stilling a Tempest. III. The Cure of two Demoniacks.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Answer which *Jesus Christ* returned to a Scribe that was desirous to follow Him, tended to make him sensible, that he was not to expect worldly Advantages in his Service; and what He said to one of his Disciples, that he should *leave the Dead to bury their Dead*, signified that he ought to leave the Care of Temporal Things to those that were not enlighten'd with the Light of the Gospel; and that those whom He called to be his Disciples, should follow Him without delay, and be ready to forsake every thing, and to renounce the Things of this Life, even such as are Lawful and Innocent, when they hinder us from discharging the Duties of our Calling. II. In the Miracle that our Saviour wrought for laying the Storm, we may observe on one Hand, his Power in Calming the Winds and the Sea by his Word only; and on the other, the Weakness of the Apostles, who were afraid of Perishing. This Event, which tended to confirm their Faith, ought to fill us with an entire Confidence in
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the Power and Goodness of *Jesus Christ*, and teach us to fear nothing whilst He is our Protector. III. The History of those *Demoniacs* whom our Saviour healed, shews us, that the Devil did then exercise his Power over Men, but that Christ was come to take away that Power from him, and to destroy his Kingdom. As to what happen'd to the Herd of Swine which ran headlong into the Sea after the Devils had entred into them, by the Permission of our Lord, it must be consider'd, that He was pleased by this means to try and punish the Inhabitants of that Country, and to shew that the Men whom He had healed were really possessed; that He had Power over Devils, and that those evil Spirits could do nothing without his Permission; and the whole may serve to convince Men of the Power of *Jesus Christ*, to inform them of the End of his coming into the World, and fully to persuade them of the Truth of his Doctrine.

C H A P. IX. 1,—17.

WHAT we are about to read here, contains, I. The Cure of a Man that was troubled with a Palsie. II. The Calling of *St. Matthew* to the Office of an Apostle; and Christ's Answer to those that were offended at his Eating with Sinners. III. His Reply to the Disciples of *John* the Baptist, when they asked Him, why his Disciples did not Fast as well as they.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E R E may be Two Reflexions made upon the Healing the Paralitical Person: The first, that our Lord had regard to the Faith

of that Man, and of those that presented him ; which shews, that it is by Faith, and by an humble Recourse to *Jesus Christ*, that we partake of the Effects of his Grace. The *second*, That *Jesus Christ* had not only Power to heal the Sick, but likewise that of Pardoning Sin. This obliges us to look upon Him as our Judge and our God ; and to put our selves into a Condition of obtaining from Him the Remission of our Sins by Repentance and Faith. II. The Answer our Lord returned to those that found fault at his eating with Publicans, and other People of a bad Life, teacheth us that He came into the World to save Sinners, and to call them to Repentance. This is a Doctrine which sets before our Eyes the Mercy of God towards those that sin against Him ; but which shews us at the same time, that the Design of the Saviour of the World was to bring them to Repentance, and that without it there is no attaining to Salvation. III. What our Lord said upon his Disciples not observing the usual Fasts, like the Disciples of *John* the Baptist, must be understood thus : That *Jesus Christ* had his Reasons for not obliging his Disciples to Fast regularly, and for not exposing them as yet to great Sufferings ; that the Time would come, when they should be called, not only to Fast, but likewise to undergo the greatest Sufferings ; but whilst He was with them, He spar'd their Weakness, because they were not as yet in a Condition to bear those severe Tryals through which they were to pass afterwards ; this is what He represents by the Comparisons of old Cloth, and of old Bottles ; so that what Christ says in this Place, does not signifie that He condemns Fasting, or a Life of Mortification, but only that He had regard to the State his Disci-

Disciples were in at that Time, but for the rest, this Doctrine plainly supposes that Christ calls his Disciples to Sufferings, and to a mortify'd Life, not to Ease or Pleasures.

C H A P. IX. 18,—38.

TH E Evangelist relates several Miracles of our Saviour. I. The Cure of a Woman diseased by loss of Blood. II. The Resurrection of a young Maiden. III. The Cure of two blind Persons, and that of a dumb Man possess'd by the Devil. IV. At the end of this Chapter, our Lord exhorts his Disciples to pray to God that He would send Persons to labour in the Establishment of his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E several Miracles related in this Chapter, are new Proofs of the Power and Goodness of *Jesus Christ*; but there are Two among them of which we ought to take a more particular Notice. The *first* is, the Healing of a Woman that had been distemper'd with a Flux of Blood for *Twelve* Years. We see by this History, that our Lord cured the most inveterate and most incurable Distempers; but above all, we ought to observe therein, I. The Humility and Faith of that Woman, who, not daring to speak to Christ, believ'd that if she could only touch his Garment she should be Whole, which likewise happen'd to her as she had thought. This Example shews us, that our Lord has respect to Humility and Faith, and that the infallible Means of obtaining his Favour, is to have recourse to Him with a deep Humility, and an entire Reliance. II. The other Miracle was, the Resurrection of

the Daughter of *Jairus*. This Miracle proves that *Jesus Christ* had not only the Power of Healing the Infirm, but that He could even restore Life to the Dead ; which ought fully to convince us, that He was sent from God, and confirm us in the Belief and Expectation of our own Resurrection. III. We may observe about the End of the Chapter, that our Saviour seeing the People which followed Him scattered like Sheep without a Shepherd, and wanting Instruction and good Guides, took pity on them, and bid his Disciples *Pray the Lord of the Harvest, to send Labourers into his Harvest*. This shews the great Goodness and Zeal wherewith Christ was animated, and should inspire us with the same Sentiments of Compassion and Kindness to those that wander out of the Way, and stir us up to beseech God, that he would send faithful Ministers, that might labour with Efficacy in the Conversion of Men, and Establishment of his Kingdom.

C H A P. X. 1,——15.

WE see here, I. The Calling and the Names of the Twelve Apostles. II. The Commands which our Lord gave them when He sent them the first Time into *Judea*, to declare that the Kingdom of God was come.

Reflexions after the Reading.

HERE are three Things to be observ'd for our Instruction. I. The *first* is, the Calling of the blessed Apostles, whom *Jesus Christ* chose to be the Witnesses of his Life, his Preaching, and his Miracles, and to the End that they themselves might go and declare the Gospel and work Miracles likewise, first among the

the *Jews*, and afterwards throughout the World. Now since it was by their Means that the Christian Religion has been establish'd, and that God has been pleas'd to preserve their Names in the Sacred Writings, their Memory ought to be blessed in the Church; we ought to imitate them in their Zeal, their Patience, and all the other Virtues that have shin'd forth so conspicuously in them; and we are bound to submit our selves to the Doctrine which they taught, as well by Word of Mouth as in Writing. II. The *second* Thing to be consider'd is, that though *Jesus Christ* forbid his Apostles to go among the *Gentiles*, or the *Samaritans*, and though He commanded them to preach the Gospel to the *Jews* only, it was for prudential Reasons, namely, that the *Jews* might not be scandaliz'd therewith, and because the Gospel was not to be preach'd to the others till after his Ascension. And because the Time was not yet come that the Apostles should go to all Parts of the World, it was for that Reason that He bid them to make no Provision for their Journey, it being not necessary then, forasmuch as they were not to go very far off, and that their Travels were to be but very short; another Reason likewise was, to teach them thereby to depend upon Providence. III. In the Instructions which our Lord gave his Apostles, we see on one hand, that those who preach the Gospel, ought to do it with great Zeal, Disinterestedness, and Prudence; and on the other, that the Gospel is not receiv'd, but by those who have a true Heart, and who are Meek and Peaceable; that it is to Persons of this Character, that Ministers of *Jesus Christ* should apply themselves; but when they meet with People who will not hear nor receive them, they should leave them;

and that those who thus reject the Gospel, do reject *Jesus Christ*, depriving themselves of their own Salvation, and exposing themselves to the greater Condemnation.

C H A P. X. 16,—42.

JESUS CHRIST warns his Apostles of what was to befall them in the Exercise of their Ministry. He foretels them, that they should be Persecuted, and meet with great Troubles on account of the Gospel; but to encourage them, He promises them the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, and the Protection of God. He sets before them his own Example; He exhorts them not to fear Men, but God alone; He declares what will happen to those who confess Him, and what to those who deny Him before Men: *Lastly*, He promises to bless and reward those that shall receive his Disciples, and do good to them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

- I. **I**N this Discourse of our Lord, we have a strong Proof of the Divinity of the Christian Religion, since the Apostles who preach'd it, have been exposed to divers Persecutions, and have sealed the Truth of the Gospel by their Sufferings and Blood, and that nevertheless this Religion has not fail'd to be Establish'd.
- II. The Ministers of *Jesus Christ* may learn from hence, to discharge their Office with Faithfulness, and with an holy Boldness, with much Wisdom and Prudence, and with a firm Reliance upon God, without fearing Men, or their Persecution.
- III. We may make here several useful Reflexions, whereof these are the chief: That those who make Profession of Truth

Truth and Piety, do often expose themselves to the Hatred and Persecution of the World ; that true Christians ought not to faint, nor lose their Courage, for such Things ; and that neither Fear nor Shame should hinder them from discharging their Duty ; that God assists and supports his faithful Servants, and all those that fear Him, and protects in a particular manner such as be Persecuted for his sake ; that we should not fear the Men that can only hurt our Body, but God alone, who can cast both Body and Soul into Hell ; that Troubles and Divisions are often raised in the World on account of the Gospel ; but that they only happen by the Fault of Men ; that Christians ought to be ready to renounce all that is dearest to them in this World to follow *Jesus Christ*. And, *Lastly*, that our Lord will abundantly recompence the Piety and Charity of those that shall receive and assist his Disciples. Let us carefully meditate upon all these Things, that we may be thereby more and more encouraged to make an open Profession of the Religion of our Saviour, to practise all the Duties thereof, and particularly, to exercise Works of Charity with Pleasure and Perseverance. God grant us Grace to do so. *Amen.*

C H A P. XI.

TH E S E are the Contents of this Chapter. I. *John* the Baptist having sent two of his Disciples to *Jesus Christ*, to know of him whether He were the Messiah, our Lord shews that He was so, by working Miracles before them. II. He speaks of the Nature and Excellence of the Office of *John* the Baptist. III. He complains of the Hardness of the *Jews*, who had not benefitted either by the Ministry of
John

John the Baptist, or by his; and He threatens the Cities of *Galilee*, where He had preach'd and done Miracles without any Effect. IV. He praises God that such as were of a meek and lowly Spirit did receive his Doctrine, whilst those who past in the World for the Wisest and most Knowing, rejected the same; and He invites all those that were weary and heavy Laden to come unto Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO make the best Use of the Reading of this Chapter, we must observe, I. That if *John* the Baptist sent to enquire of our Lord whether He was the Messiah, it was not that he doubted thereof, but to the end his Disciples might be likewise convinc'd. II. That *Jesus Christ* would not tell them plainly that He was the Messiah, but contented Himself to prove by Miracles that He was so, and to warn them not to be offended if He appear'd in a very mean Condition. III. 'Twas with the same Design that He made those who heard Him take notice, that when they went to *John* the Baptist in the Wilderness, it was not to see a Reed shaken with the Wind; meaning that they went not upon an Occasion of very little Importance, or to see a very inconsiderable Person; neither was it a Man that was to appear with Pomp and Splendour, like those we meet with in Kings Palaces; but that they had seen in the Person of *John* the Baptist, a great Prophet, and even the greatest of Prophets, since he was the Forerunner of the Messiah; and that nevertheless People oppos'd him, and the Kingdom of God which he preached, ever since he began to appear. Christ told them all this, to shew that his Kingdom was

was not of this World, and that they ought not to be surpriz'd if He himself appear'd in so low and abject a Condition, and even tho' He were rejected. IV. The Complaints that our Lord made against the *Jews*, who had not benefitted, either by the Preaching of *John* the Baptist or of Himself, objecting that the Life of the former was too strict, and that of the latter, not enough so, ought to convince us, that nothing can satisfy unbelieving or vicious Men, who reject all the several Means that God uses to gain them, and take occasion even from thence to harden themselves yet the more. V. The Threatnings which our Lord denounced against those Cities where He had work'd Miracles, but which did not repent, is a Warning to us, that those People to whom God shews the greatest Kindness, and who do not grow better by the Preaching of the Gospel, shall be punish'd much more severely than others. VI. The Thanks which Christ returned to God, because the Poor and Ignorant had receiv'd his Doctrine, whilst at the same time it was rejected by the Great and Wise Men of the World, teach us, that we can't receive the Gospel, but with an upright, humble, and simple Heart, nor without renouncing worldly Glory, and false Wisdom. *Lastly*, Since this charitable Saviour does with so much Tenderneſs call to Him all such as Labour and are heavy Laden, and since He assures us, that his *Yoke is easie, and his Burthen light*, let us draw near to Him with an humble and lively Sense of our own Misery, and with a burning Desire of being deliver'd from it; let us chearfully submit to his Doctrine and Divine Precepts; let us be meek and lowly of Heart as He was, and then we shall find in Him Peace of Mind, and perfect Happiness.

C H A P. XII. 1,—20.

THIS contains three Things. I. The Action of our Saviour's Disciples, who pluck'd the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, and what Christ said in their Justification. II. The Healing of a Man who had a wither'd Hand, and the manner in which our Lord confounded the Pharisees, who were offended at his having wrought that Miracle upon the Sabbath-Day. III. The Prohibition made to the People by our Lord, to publish his Miracles; whereupon St. *Matthew* quotes a Prophecy from *Isaiah*, describing the Prudence, Humility, and Meekness that should appear in the Manner in which the Messiah was to exercise his Ministry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E R E are three Reflexions to be made upon this first Part of the *xiith* Chapter of St. *Matthew*. I. The first relates to the Malice and Hypocrisie of the *Pharisees*, who found fault with the Disciples of Christ for plucking off the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, and because their Master had healed a Man with a wither'd Hand upon the like Day. In this, we see the Character of wicked Men and Hypocrites, and those that have nothing but a false Zeal, namely, that they are scandaliz'd at innocent Matters, and even sometimes at such as are good, necessary, and acceptable to God, whilst they themselves neglect the most essential Duties of Religion, and especially that of Charity. II. We ought to take very serious Notice of what our Lord says upon this Occasion, and chiefly these Words, *I will have Mercy, and*
not

not Sacrifice: Let us learn from thence, that Religion does not barely consist in external Matters, and in the Observation of Ceremonies; that indeed those Things must not be despised or neglected, and that they have their use when practised, agreeably to the Intention of God, who has establish'd them; but what God requires preferably to all other Matters is, that we should obey his Commandments, that we should exercise true Charity and Works of Mercy. III. The third Reflexion may be made upon the Behaviour of *Jesus Christ*, who forbid his Miracles should be publish'd, and upon these Words of *Isaiah*: *He will not quench the smoking Flax, nor bruise the broken Reed.* Here we see the great Prudence of our Lord, who avoided every thing that look'd like Pomp or Ostentation; as likewise his Humility, Meekness, and Condescension. We observe particularly, that He discourages no Body, that He bears with the Weakness of Men with great Patience and Goodness; and that while there is any good in us, He don't forsake us. This ought on one hand to encourage and make us confide in Him, and on the other, induce us to imitate Him, and to be Humble, Meek and Peaceful as He was; to fly Vanity and Vain-glory, and not to hunt after Praise; to avoid Quarrels and Disputes; to exercise great Forbearance towards Men; to make Allowance for, and condescend to their Weaknesses. Thus we shall be like *JESUS CHRIST*, and shew that we are his Disciples.

C H A P. XII. 21,—50.

CH R I S T does *Three* Things here. I. He cures a *Demoniack*; and as the *Pharisees* attributed that Miracle to the Power of the Devil, our Lord shews the Malice and Falshood of that Accusation, by saying, that the Devil did not destroy his own Kingdom, and that He, *Christ*, could not drive away evil Spirits, if He had not a greater Power than theirs; He threaten'd the *Pharisees* that their Blasphemies should never be pardon'd, and that their impious Discourse was a Proof of the extream Wickedness of their Heart. II. Being desir'd by the *Pharisees* to shew them a Sign, He refus'd to do it, referring them to the Resurrection, which was to be the last and strongest Proof of what He was; and He laments the Unbelief of the *Jews*, mentioning upon that Account the Example of the *Ninevites*, that of the Queen of *Sheba*, and a Parable. III. He declares that his true Disciples were as dear to Him as his nearest Relations.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE here find, I. That the *Pharisees* attributed the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* to the Power of the Devil, and that our Lord observing their desperate Wickedness, assur'd them, that that Blasphemy should not be forgiven them. We may see by this Instance, what Men are capable of when blinded by their Prejudices, and transported by their Passions, and how they resist the strongest Means that God uses to overcome their obdurateness. If we have a just Horror for such Blasphemies of the *Pharisees*, and the terrible Punishment our Lord denounces

nounces against them, let us take care not to imitate them, either by impious and prophane Language against God and Piety, or by resisting the Truth when it is made manifest to us : Or, *lastly*, the Operation of the Holy Ghost when we perceive it within us. And since Christ has declared, that good Discourses are the Signs of a good Heart, that wicked Discourses proceed from a corrupt Heart, and that Men must give an Account of all the evil Words they have spoken, let us learn from thence, that an honest Man is known by his Words, and that the Means of regulating them is, to sanctifie our Heart. II. Upon the *Pharisees* desiring Christ to give them a Sign, after so many Miracles that He had already wrought in their Sight, we may observe, that Unbelievers, and those who have a wicked Heart, are never satisfy'd, and that nothing is clear or strong enough for their Conviction. And our Lord's refusing to give them such a Sign, shews us: That when God has done all that's necessary to overcome the Hardness of Mens Hearts, if they don't make a right Use thereof, He gives them up to their own obstinate Temper. III. If the Example of the Queen of *Sheba*, and that of the *Ninevites*, condemned the unbelieving *Jews*, they will condemn us much more if we don't repent, since God has been more kind to us than He was to them. The Comparison of the evil Spirit which enters again into a Man after it was gone out, and by which our Lord shew'd what was to happen to the *Jews* that rejected Him, is a Warning to us, that those upon whom God hath bestow'd his Grace, and that make an ill Use thereof, shall be depriv'd of the same, shall fall into a greater Degree of Hardness, and into greater Condemnation also. IV. The Declaration which

which our Saviour made, that those who do the Will of God, were as dear to Him as his Mother and Brethren, teaches us, that Holiness, and the Observation of God's Commandments, is the true Mark of the Disciples of *Jesus*, and is what admits us into a Share of his Love; that so we ought to apply our selves above all Things to hear his Word, and to keep it. This likewise shews us, that those who love God, and fear Him, are the People to whom we ought chiefly to devote our Love and Esteem.

CHAP. XIII. 1,—23.

OUR Lord proposes the Parable of the Seed, and afterwards explains it in Private to his Disciples.

Reflexions after the Reading.

HERE we see the Parable of the Seed, and our Saviour's Explanation thereof. The Design of *Jesus Christ* in this Parable is, to teach his Disciples how the Word of God is received by those to whom it is declar'd; He speaks of *Four* Kinds of Persons: I. The *First*, are those upon whom his Word makes no Impression, and whose Heart is entirely harden'd; this is represented by the Seed falling on the Way side. II. The *Second*, are those that receive the Word of God, and relish it, but afterwards forsake the Truth and Holiness, as soon as they are exposed to Persecution, or some other Tryal: Christ represents the State of such People, by the Seed falling among the Rocks, which indeed may spring up, but having no Root, withers away presently. III. The *Third* Sort, are the Hearers in whom this Word

is render'd useleſs by the Love of Riches and Pleaſures, and by the Cares of this Life, after the ſame Manner as Seed falling among Thorns, where it will be choak'd and ſtified. IV. The *laſt*, are thoſe who receive it with a good Heart, in which it produces its Fruit, and its Effect, which is Perſeverance to the End; and this is figurated by Seed ſown in good Ground, where it brings forth Fruit in abundance. Let us Chriſtians acknowledge, as our Saviour there exhorts us, how happy we are to hear theſe Things, to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God, and to be more enlighten'd than all the ancient Prophets. Let us make uſe, as we are bound to do, of theſe Advantages, and of our Light, leaſt God ſhould deprive us thereof, and leaſt we ſhould fall into Sin, and into the Condemnation of thoſe who ſee and hear, but will not receive nor underſtand the Truth, and reſuſe to be converted. Let us avoid the Obduratenefs of thoſe Hearers, upon whom the Word of God makes no Impreſſion, as well as the Inconſtancy of others who are affected therewith, but do not perſevere. Let us baniſh from our Hearts the Cares of this Life, the Love of Pleaſures and of worldly Goods, which, like Thorns, choak the good Seed; and let us be of the Number of thoſe pious Hearers, who do not only hearken to the Word of God, but keep it, and bring forth the Fruits thereof abundantly, and with perſeverance, by all Kinds of good Works, to the Glory of God, and to their own Salvation. The Lord grant us all this Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. XIII. 24,—43.

CH R I S T proposes three Parables here: I. That of the Tares. II. That of the Grain of Mustard-Seed. And, III. That of the Leaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Parable of the Tares signifies, according to the Explanation our Saviour himself gives thereof, that among those who should embrace the Profession of the Gospel, there would be many Hypocrites, and that the Wicked would be mixed with the Good till the End of the World; but that then they shall be separated from each other; that the Wicked shall be condemned to everlasting Torments, and the Righteous receiv'd to heavenly Glory. The Use therefore we are to make of this Parable is, I. *First*, Not to be moved nor offended, if we see among Christians some that fall into Vice and Error. *Secondly*, To stand upon our Guard, to avoid the Company of wicked Men, least we be seduced by them; but nevertheless, to think always charitably of them; to do our utmost Endeavours to recover them from their Hardness; and as to our selves, to labour to be of the Number of the Righteous, that at Christ's second Coming, we may be admitted into his Kingdom. II. By the Similitude of the Mustard-Seed, and, III. by that of Leaven, the Design of our Lord was to shew, that though the Number of his Disciples was then but very small, and his Doctrine scarce known in the World, yet it should be soon spread over the whole Earth. Christ foretold this in mystical and hidden Expressions, not thinking
fit

fit at that time to declare openly, for fear of scandalizing the *Jews*; that the *Gentiles* and all Nations should come into the Church; and this is the Reason why he so often made use of Parables. Thus these Comparisons are Prophetical, of which we Christians have seen the Meaning and the Truth, forasmuch as the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ* has been preach'd and receiv'd in so many Parts of the World, as He foretold it should, which is likewise a strong Proof of the Divinity of the Gospel. Let us give Thanks to God that this heavenly Doctrine has been extended even to us, and let us beseech Him, that He would more and more establish his Kingdom among us, by sanctifying his Church; and that He would call to the Knowledge thereof, those People who are depriv'd of it, or who have never embrac'd it, to the end, that the whole Earth may be full of his Knowledge and of his Glory, and that the Name of God our Father may be glorified in all Places, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

C H A P. XIII. 44, — 58.

OUR Lord proposes to his Disciples the Similitude of some hidden Treasures, that of the Pearl, and of the Net. He exhorts them afterwards to make a right Use of his Instructions; then He goes to *Nazareth*, where few People believed on Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Comparisons of the hidden Treasure, and that of the Pearl, tend to convince us, that there is nothing more Precious, nor more Excellent, than the Gospel, and the Advantages that attend it; that the greatest Happiness

which can befall us is, to be possess'd of those Advantages, and therefore that we ought to do every thing towards procuring them with Joy and Earnestness, and even to renounce all that is dearest to us in this World, to acquire such a precious Treasure. The Parable of the Net catching all kind of Things, tends to the same purpose as that of the Tares, which has been already explain'd; 'tis to denote, that all those who live in the Church are not true Members of it; that there are many Hypocrites among them; but that at the End of the World, the Angels will separate the Righteous from the Wicked; let us have this great and final Separation always before our Eyes, that it may induce us to ~~depart~~ depart from Evil, and to sanctifie our Selves; let us carefully retain these Divine Instructions of our Lord *Jesus Christ*; let us keep them in our Heart as in a Chest, to the End that we may continually fetch from thence the necessary Supplies and Encouragements to resist the Temptations that surround us, and to excite us to the Love of God, and the Practice of good Works: We may have observ'd at the End of this Chapter, that the Inhabitants of *Nazareth* believed not on *Jesus Christ*, though they heard his Doctrine, and saw some of his Miracles, because they look'd upon him as the Son of a Carpenter, and because He was bred among them, which made our Lord tell them, that no Prophet was receiv'd in his own Country. Let us make a better Use than those People did of Christ's Instructions; let us not despise the Word of God, nor the Ministry of his true Servants, upon pretence that these Benefits are common and ordinary, and that we enjoy them without difficulty, least God should deprive us of them for our Ingratitude, as it happen'd to those of *Nazareth*,

zareth, amongst whom our Saviour could not work many Miracles by reason of their Unbelief.

C H A P. XIV.

ST. *Matthew* relates *three* Things. I. The History of the Death of *John* the Baptist. II. How Christ fed *Five Thousand* Persons with five Loaves and two Fishes. III. Another Miracle perform'd by our Lord, when, his Disciples being expos'd to a Storm, He came to them walking upon the Sea.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may make this general Reflexion upon the Death of *John* the Baptist, namely, that God was pleased to suffer that this holy Man, who had preach'd the Coming of the Kingdom of God, should die by a violent Death, to convince the *Jews*, that his Kingdom was not to be a Temporal one; and that they might not be offended when Christ himself should be put to Death. It may be observ'd in the next Place, that the Cause of *John* the Baptist's Death was, the Zeal that that Prophet shewed in reprov'g *Herod* for his criminal Correspondence with *Herodias*; the Hatred which that immodest Woman had conceiv'd against *John* on the same Account, and the Complacency that *Herod* had for her. The Reflexions that are to be made upon all this are, That the Servants of God ought to rebuke all sorts of Persons with Courage and Zeal, tho' they often draw upon themselves thereby the Hatred of wicked Men; that Impurity, and the Love of Pleasures, make People commit many Sins: And, *Lastly*, that great Evils may result from

rash Oaths, as well as from the unseasonable and evil Shame, and the Complacence that we have for vicious People. II. The Miracle of the five Loaves has this particularity in it, that it was wrought in the Presence of several Thousands of Men, who were Witnesses, and shar'd in the Benefit of it; which renders this Miracle yet more certain, and proves the wonderful Power of our Lord, as well as his Goodness towards the People that followed him. III. *Lastly*, The other Miracle that Christ did, when He went to his Disciples, walking upon the Sea, and caus'd St. *Peter* to walk upon it likewise, is another Proof of his unlimited Power, and of his Love to his Disciples, and especially to this Apostle; whereupon we are to consider, that if God permits us to be expos'd to several Dangers, He does also come seasonably to our Assistance; and that as the Zeal and Faith of St. *Peter* enabled him at first to walk upon the Water, into which he sunk afterwards, through fear; so it is the Want of Faith only, that makes us yield to Temptations and Dangers, but that we may happily surmount the same by Faith, and the Assistance of the Lord.

C H A P. XV. 1,—20.

I. **C**H R I S T justifies his Disciples for not observing the Traditions and Customs of the *Jews*; and He convinces the *Pharisees*, who were offended at it, that they themselves violate the Divine Law by their Traditions, in Teaching that if any one devoted to God such a Part of his Estate, wherewith he might have relieved his Father or Mother, it was not lawful for him, after such a Vow, to apply it to such Assistance.

II. In the next Place, our Lord shews what it

it is that defiles a Man, and what does not defile him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Discourse between *Christ* and the *Pharisees*, furnishes us with the following Instructions: I. That Hypocrites make Religion and Piety to consist only in external Duties, and oftentimes in such as are vain and of very small Weight; that they scrupulously observe these kinds of Things, and condemn those that don't observe them, whilst they themselves violate the most important Duties, and the most positive Commands of God. II. That the Duty of Children to their Parents is altogether inviolable, that nothing can dispense therewith, and that they are particularly oblig'd to assist them in Time of Need. III. That Vows and Oaths which are rash, and contrary to the Divine Law, ought not to be kept. IV. That God rejects the Worship of those who only honour Him with their Mouths and Lips, but whose Hearts are far from Him; and that He will be served according as He has commanded in his Word, and not according to the Inventions and Directions of Men. V. The last Instruction which our Lord gives us is very important, and of great Use: Namely, That it is not only the external Actions which defile Men, and render them guilty before God, but that it is likewise and chiefly the wicked Thoughts and Motions of the Heart, and Desires tending to Impurity, to Unrighteousness, to Pride, to Slander, and other Sins. This is a Doctrine which we must never forget, and which obliges us more particularly to study the internal Sanctification and Purity of the Heart and Conscience.

C H A P. XV. 21,—39.

I. **O**UR Lord heals the Daughter of a *Canaanitish* Woman; And, II. Feeds *Four Thousand* Men with seven Loaves and a few Fishes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E ought to give a particular Attention to the Miracle which Christ wrought by healing the Daughter of the *Canaanite*; He deny'd at first to cure her, because her Mother was a *Gentile*; his Reasons for doing so, were not only thereby to excite the Zeal of that Woman, but likewise because the Time was not yet come in which the *Gentiles* were to be called; and because that during his Stay upon Earth, He was only sent to the *Jews*. But seeing her Perseverance and great Humility, He did at last what she desired of him. By this Example we may observe, that Prayers made with Faith, Humility, and Perseverance, are very acceptable to God, and very powerful; that if God does not hear us at first, it is to try us, to encourage our Zeal, and to render us more sensible of our own Unworthiness; but that if we continue to call upon Him fervently, He grants us at last those Favours we beg of Him.

II. *Lastly*, This Miracle, as well as a great Number more which our Lord wrought in Healing the Sick, in Feeding *Four Thousand* Men with seven Loaves and a few Fishes, and the like, should make us acknowledge the infinite Power of *Jesus Christ*, and his exceeding great Charity towards Men; and ought to excite us to praise God at the Hearing of so many Won-

Wonders, and to glorifie Him, as those who were Eye-Witnesses of them did formerly.

C H A P. XVI.

THIS Chapter has four Parts: I. Christ refuses to shew a Sign, which the *Pharisees* desired of Him, and reproaches them for their Blindness. II. He warns his Disciples to take heed of the Leaven of the *Pharisees*. III. Having ask'd the Apostles their Opinion concerning Him, St. *Peter* confesses that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God; whereupon our Lord makes him very gracious Promises. IV. He foretels his own Death; He exhorts his Disciples to prepare for Sufferings; and to engage them thereto, He shews them the Importance of the Salvation or Loss of the Soul. He likewise foretels that there was one among his Apostles that should not die till his Kingdom was establish'd, and till the Destruction of the *Jews*, which was accomplished in St. *John*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Reflexion that we ought to make here, relates to the Blindness of the *Pharisees*, who, notwithstanding that Christ had done so many Miracles, and that they might perceive from thence, that the Time of the *Messiah's* Coming was fulfilled, were still urgent with our Lord to shew them a Sign, which He very justly refused to do. This may convince us, that after God has given sufficient Proofs of the Truth of the Gospel, if Men do not submit to it, they must not expect that God will do more to overcome their Unbelief. II. The Warning that Christ gave his Disciples to beware of the Doctrine of the *Pharisees*, who
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stuck to the outside of Religion, and to Traditions; and also the Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, who deny'd the Resurrection, and the Immortality of the Soul, is a Lesson to us, to avoid with great Care Superstition and Hypocrisie, as well as impious and libertine Opinions. III. The Confession that *St. Peter* made, that *our Lord was the Christ, the Son of the Living God*, teaches us, that this is the great and Fundamental Truth which ought to be believed and confessed by Christians before the whole World. IV. The Promise that Christ made to that Apostle, when He said to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build the Church, and I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, signifies, that *St. Peter* would be one of the principal Ministers used by him in the Establishment of his Church; and that it would be he, who should first preach the Gospel both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. V. When we see Christ foretelling his Death, and severely rebuking *St. Peter*, who (being full of the Prejudices of the *Jews*) could not be persuaded that the *Messiah* was to die, we must consider that our Lord proceeded in that manner more plainly to convince his Disciples that it was necessary He should suffer Death, and to shew them He was resolved to do it. VI. The last Verses of this Chapter furnish us with several Instructions of great Moment, and particularly these three; That the first Thing Christ requires of his Disciples is, to renounce themselves, and to be prepared for Sufferings; and that the Desire of Preserving our Lives should never hinder us from following and obeying him; That the Salvation and Loss of the Soul is the most important Thing imaginable; and that it is of no Advantage to gain the whole World, if a Man loses his own Soul. And, Lastly, That the Son

Son of God will come with Glory from Heaven, to render to us all according to our Works.

C H A P. XVII.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The History of the Transfiguration of *Jesus Christ*. II. The Discourse He had with his Apostles about the Coming of *Elias*, whom the *Jews* expected. III. The Cure of a Demoniac, whom the Apostles could not drive out. IV. A Miracle wrought by Christ for the Payment of the Tribute Money, given by the *Jews* for the Maintenance of the Temple and Divine Service.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **O**UR Lord was pleased to be transformed a little before his Death in the Presence of three of his Apostles, and to shew them his Glory, to strengthen their Faith, and to fortifie them against the Scandal which his Death might give them. The Coming of *Moses* and *Elias*, who appeared at that Time, shews, that Christ was He whose Coming the Prophets had foretold, and that He was greater than the most Excellent of the Prophets. It proves also, that these holy Men were not annihilated, and that therefore there is another Life reserved for good Men after this. And the Voice which God caused to be heard from Heaven, engages us to look upon *Jesus Christ* as the Son of God, and to hear and obey none other but Him. II. What Christ said to his Disciples, that *John* the Baptist was that *Elias*, whose Coming the Prophets had foretold, should convince us of the Dignity of the Person of *John* the Baptist, and of the Authority of his

his Ministry. III. In the History of the Demoniack, whom the Apostles could not cure, we find that Christ was invested with a Power which nothing could resist, and that He was at the same Time full of Compassion towards the Miserable. We likewise see, that the Want of Faith in the Apostles, was the Cause they could not work this Miracle; and, on the contrary, the Father of that poor Creature did by his Faith obtain the Cure of his Son. This shews us, how necessary and how efficacious Faith is, and how great Reason we have to endeavour to be strengthen'd therein, since it is not less necessary now for our Salvation, than it was formerly for Miracles. The Concern which the Apostles shew'd when Christ foretold his Death, is another Proof of the Weakness of their Faith; but as for us, who know that Christ died that He might obtain for us Everlasting Life, we ought to consider his Death, as the Foundation of our Hopes and Happiness. IV. *Lastly*, The miraculous Manner in which our Lord paid the Tribute, is a remarkable Effect of his Power; He was also pleased to shew thereby that He did not despise the Things that concerned Religion; and it is an Example for us to submit to publick Rule, and to give without grudging what we are bound to contribute; especially when the Service of God and Works of Piety are in the Case.

CHAP. XVIII. 1,—14.

TH E Apostles ask our Lord which of them should be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. They put this Question to Him, because they were of the same Opinion with the *Jews*, that the Kingdom of the Messiah would be

be Establish'd upon the Earth, and that there would be great Offices and Places to be obtain'd in this Kingdom. Our Lord, to undeceive them, places a little Child in the midst of them, and exhorts them to become like little Children: He advises them not to despise, nor to be offended at such as believe in Him, though they are very mean as to this World, and for this Reason represents to them, that it is a great Sin to give Scandal to any of the Faithful. That God protects them by his Angels, and that He calls even the greatest Sinners to Repentance and Salvation. All this Discourse of *Jesus Christ* tends to deliver the Apostles from those Prejudices under which they labour'd, with respect to the Kingdom of the Messiah, and to inspire them with Sentiments of Charity and Humility.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Saviour of the World teaches us here, I. That the Kingdom which He came to Establish, is a spiritual and heavenly Kingdom; and that to enter into it, we must be extremely Humble, and set our Hearts no more upon the Glories and Honours of this World, than little Children do. II. That we ought to have a very high Value for the true Disciples of Christ, tho' they should be but low and mean among Men; that good People are most dear to God, since He causes his holy Angels to watch over them, and that therefore we ought to honour and assist them; that it is a very great Sin to despise or offend them, and that God will severely revenge that Sin. These Considerations should likewise encourage the Faithful, and inspire them with great Confidence. III. What Christ says about Offences, shews

shews us, that we ought not to be surpriz'd if they happen; that God is not the Cause of them; that they do not come but through the Fault of Men; and that He will punish those who are the Occasion of them: It likewise follows from thence, that we ought to avoid Sin and Scandal with the utmost Care; and that we may do it by following the Council which our Lord lays down, and especially by avoiding every Thing that may be a stumbling Block to our selves or others. *Lastly*, What our Lord says here, that God does not desire that even the Meanest should perish, and that there is Joy in Heaven over one repenting Sinner, shews, that it is not lawful to despise any Body; but, on the contrary, that we ought to procure the Edification of all Men as far as in us lies; to labour for the Conversion of Sinners; to rejoice when they repent; and to make a right Use our selves of the Patience and Mercy of the Lord.

C H A P. XVIII. 15,—35.

THIS Portion of Scripture consists of two Parts: I. Christ teaches his Disciples after what manner they ought to behave towards their Brethren that offend them, and how they ought to tell them of their Fault, both privately and by the Means of the Church. II. He shews by a Parable, the Obligation we lie under to pardon one another, and what they have to expect that are of an unforgiving Temper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CH R I S T teaches us here, I. That we are obliged to pardon each other, and to labour for Peace by all possible Means. II. He establishes the Authority and Discipline of the Church, and the Necessity of Warnings and Reproofs, both private and publick ; He shews, that all the Members of a Church ought to submit themselves to the Discipline establish'd therein, and that such as refuse to hearken to the Voice of the Church, and despise its Warnings, ought to be look'd upon as Heathens and Publicans ; that is to say, they should not be any longer accounted Members of the Church, but be cut off from its Communion ; He declares that God ratifies and confirms in Heaven what the Church does here below agreeably to his Intentions. III. The Promise that our Lord makes, to hear those that should join together to ask any thing ; and of being present in the midst of those that should be gathered together in his Name, teaches us, that the Prayers that are offered up in the Spirit of Unity and Charity, are very acceptable to God, as well as those Congregations that are form'd to serve and call upon Him. IV. Christ instructs us about the Nature and Necessity of Forgiveness. He explains the Nature of it, by saying, that a Man ought to pardon even seven times seventy Faults, which denotes, that Forgiveness ought to be general and unlimited, and that we should be disposed to pardon all Kinds of Persons, and all sorts of Offences, even such as are continued and repeated, and that at all Times, without ever being discourag'd. He shews the Necessity of such Forgiveness, by the Parable of the Servant, to whom his Master had remitted a very
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considerable Debt; but who would not pardon a very small one of his Fellow-Servant's. This Parable sets *Three* Things before our Eyes: *First*, The infinite Goodness of God, who vouchsafes to pardon us his Servants and his Creatures, though our Sins are very great and very numerous. *Secondly*, The Crime of Ingratitude in those who refuse to pardon Men who are their Equals, and whose Offences are very Light in comparison with the Sins we commit against God. *Thirdly*, The just and terrible Punishment of all those who do not pardon heartily and universally the Offences and Injuries they have receiv'd from every Body.

C H A P. XIX. 1,—15.

TH E *Pharisees* having ask'd our Lord, whether it was lawful for Husbands to put away their Wives, as was the Practice of the *Jews*; He answers them, that Divorces were contrary to the first Institution of Marriage, and that they ought not to prevail any longer; and upon this Occasion tells his Disciples, inquiring of Him about the State of Matrimony, that there should be some People who would entirely renounce it for the sake of the Gospel: After this, He blesses little Children that were brought to him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WH A T our Saviour says at the Beginning of this Chapter with respect to Matrimony, and the Divorces that were in Use among the *Jews*, teaches us in general, that many things which had been tollerated till that Time, by reason of the Condition of that People, and of their hard and carnal Temper, would not be allowed

allowed among Christians, because God has given them greater Light, and called them to a higher Degree of Holiness. We learn from hence particularly, that by the Divine Institution, a Man and a Woman are inseparably united by the Laws of Matrimony; that those Laws ought to be inviolably observed, and that nothing but Adultery can justify a Divorce, nor afford a Liberty of Marrying again. Christ shews us besides, that the Gospel calls us to great Chastity, and even that there would be Christians that would absolutely renounce Marriage, in order to serve God with more freedom, and with greater Zeal to work out their own Salvation, and the Advancement of the Gospel. The Blessing that our Lord gave to little Children, which were presented to Him, shews us, that such Children are near to Him, and that He is disposed to receive and bless them; from whence we may infer, that the Devoting them to Him by Prayer and Baptism, is very agreeable to his Will; He would likewise teach us thereby, that we must be like little Children in Simplicity, Innocence, and Meekness, if we would enter into the Kingdom of God.

C H A P. XIX. 16,—30.

A Rich young Man having enquired of our Lord what he should do to be saved, was answered, that He must give away all that He had. Christ said so to Him, that it might appear whether he was inclined to follow Him; because, at that time, his Disciples were obliged, for the most part, to leave their worldly Goods, and determine themselves to undergo Poverty, Banishment, and Persecution. Christ finding the young Man discouraged by such an Answer, declared upon this Occasion, that the Attachment to, and Love of Riches, would hin-

der the Salvation of many People ; and as his Apostles had renounced every thing to follow Him, He promised them they should sit upon Twelve Thrones, to Judge the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* ; the Meaning of which is, that they should be exalted to a very great Degree of Glory when his Kingdom was Establish'd, and that they should possess a very considerable Rank in the Church. He promises likewise abundantly to reward, even in this Life, such as forsake all for the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Discourse our Lord held with the Rich young Man mention'd in this Chapter, teaches us: I. That to enter into Life everlasting, we must keep the Commandments of God. II. That we ought to be disposed to forsake our Estates, and all that we possess in this World, when God calls us to it, and when we cannot keep them without being wanting in our Duty towards Him. III. The Concern which this young Man discovered at the Hearing of what Christ said to Him, and the Declaration of our Saviour, that there would be but few rich Men that could resolve to forsake their Goods to come into the Church, shews, that Riches do commonly unite our Hearts to the World, and that the Enjoyment of them is always dangerous. IV. Christ has taught us, that such a Renunciation of worldly Goods is not an impossible Thing ; but, on the contrary, both practicable, and even easie and agreeable too, when we are enlighten'd by Faith, and assisted by the Spirit of God. Let us seriously reflect upon these Instructions ; let us take heed that the good Things of this Life do not hinder our Salvation, and if we be not called to
abandon

abandon them, as were the Apostles formerly, let us not set our Heart upon them; let us possess them without abusing them; let us employ them in Works of Piety and Charity. By this means we shall procure to our selves a Treasure in Heaven, and Share in the Blessings with which our Lord has promised to reward, both in this World and the next, such as shall have fulfilled all these Duties. May He himself grant us this Grace! *Amen.*

C H A P. XX. 1,—16.

TH E first Part of this Chapter contains the Parable of the Labourers, who going to Work in the Vineyard at different Hours of the Day, did all of them receive the same Wages.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Design of our Lord in this Parable, was to teach his Disciples that the glorious Rewards which He had promised to those who should forsake all for the Gospel, and which are recited in the foregoing Chapter, did not relate to them only; but that several others, who should be called after them, even from among the *Gentiles*, and that should obey their Call, would partake of the same Rewards as those that were invited first; and that, far from being Jealous thereat, they ought to rejoice that God did vouchsafe to impart his Mercies to a greater Number of Persons. *Lastly*, We must not make a wrong Use of this Parable, nor conclude from thence, that it will be soon enough to repent at the End of our Lives; on the contrary, we should consider, that all those of whom Christ speaks, and that

went into the Vineyard at several Hours of the Day, went thither as soon as they were ordered; that those who did not go till the End of the Day, did not go sooner, because they were not sooner sent; and that this was the Reason why they did receive the same Wages as the rest. From whence it appears, that those who obey the Vocation whensoever God is pleased to call them, shall save their Souls; but that those whom God has called for a long while, are by no means within the Case: As for instance: We our selves, and especially all such as being called from the beginning of their Lives, and refuse to follow their Vocation, are without excuse. Let us thence acknowledge, that as soon as God calls, we are all of us obliged to labour with Faithfulness and Perseverance in the Lord's Vineyard, that is to say, to his Glory and our own Salvation; to the end, that when we must yield up our Accounts, we may receive from his free Bounty the Wages appointed to all those that serve Him with Sincerity. Let us beseech Him to grant this Grace to all Men. *Amen.*

C H A P. XX. 17,—38.

I. **C**H R I S T foretels his Death and Resurrection. II. He answers the Mother of James and John, who desired that those two Apostles might enjoy the chief Places in his Kingdom. And, III. He heals two Blind Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may observe from this part of the Chapter, that our Lord warned his Disciples of his Death, to the end that they might

not be surpris'd when it should happen; and that He gave an instance of his Power as well as of his Goodness towards the Afflicted, by restoring Sight to two blind Persons; but that which is most remarkable here is, what Christ answered to the Mother of *James* and *John*, who imagining, as the rest of the *Jews* did, that the Messiah should reign upon the Earth, like the Kings of this World, claimed for her two Sons the highest Posts in his Kingdom, as being of our Lord's Kindred, and chosen by Him for Apostles, and even distinguished from the rest upon several Occasions. *Jesus Christ* condemn'd that Request, which shew'd, that that Woman did not understand the Nature of his Kingdom, and which was capable of raising Jealousies and Divisions among the Apostles. He told them, that they ought rather to be prepar'd to drink of the same Cup with Him, and be baptized with his Baptism, that is, to suffer as He should, and not to be exalted to Dignities and Preferments; that instead of looking for Places among the great ones of this World, they ought rather to be humbled and abas'd, and that this would be their Exaltation and their Glory; and that He might inspire them with such Sentiments, He referr'd them to his Example, saying that He was come into the World to appear like a Servant, and to suffer Death. These Words of our Saviour are a Warning to all Christians, to expel from their Hearts Pride and Ambition; not to hunt after Honour, or to be preferr'd before others; not to desire worldly Advantages, but to live humbly, and bear our Cross, according to the Example of the Son of God, who came into the World to serve,

and who lived in it with so great Humility, and at last laid down his Life to redeem us; it is thus therefore by imitating his Lowliness, that we shall attain to the Glory of his Kingdom. *Amen.*

C H A P. XXI. 1,—22.

ST. *Matthew* relates here, I. The History of Christ's Royal Entry into *Jerusalem*. II. How He drove out of the Temple those that prophaned it. III. What He answered to the *Pharisees*, who found fault with the Acclamations of the People on his behalf. And, IV. The Miracle of the Fig-Tree.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**O understand the Reason and Design of our Saviour's Royal Entry into *Jerusalem*, we may observe, that He had avoided till then to appear with Pomp, and to be acknowledged publickly for the Messiah; but that He thought fit six Days before his Death to make known to the World that He was the Messiah foretold by the Prophets, and that He would be acknowledged for such by the People that attended Him, and enter into the Temple in the midst of the Acclamations of a great Multitude of Persons. Nevertheless, He did it after a manner that by no means resembled the Splendour of worldly Princes, but which discovered a great deal of Humility and Meekness, and which was agreeable to what *Zachariah* had Prophesied, saying, that the Messiah should come, *Meek, and sitting upon an Ass*; whereby Christ condescended to shew, that his Kingdom was not of this World. Let us here acknowledge the Glory of our Redeemer, and at the same

same time his great Goodness; let us render Him our Homage, in Imitation of the People that followed Him to *Jerusalem*; and since we know Him much better than they did, let us worship Him with much greater Respect and Reverence; let us rejoice at his Coming, and say: *Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* II, and III. That Action of Christ, in driving away those that bought and sold in and about the Temple, was an effect of his great Zeal, and tended to make the *Jews* sensible of his divine and heavenly Authority. From hence we may learn, not to prophane the Places in which God is worshipped, whether it be by appearing there irreverently, or whether it be by rendering to God a Hypocritical and dissembled Service. IV. As for the Miracle of the Fig-Tree that wither'd away, our Lord did it to strengthen the Faith of his Disciples, at a Time when He was about to suffer Death, and to instruct them in the Virtue and Efficacy of Faith and Prayer. Thus we are taught by this Miracle, that it is through Faith and Prayer that we are to obtain from the Lord the most wholesome Favours.

C H A P. XXI. 23,—46.

THIS Lesson consists of three Parts: I. What Christ answered the *Pharisees*, who demanded of Him an Account of his Authority. II. The Parable of the two Sons whom their Father sent into the Vineyard. III. The Parable of the Husbandmen, who, after having killed their Master's Servants, did likewise slay the Son himself.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may observe here, I. That when the *Pharisees* asked our Lord, from whence He deriv'd his Authority, He would not answer them directly, but was pleased to stop their Mouths by putting a Question to them, what they thought of the Baptism of *John*; whereby He would convince them of a voluntary and malicious Ignorance, and at the same time make them sensible that his Authority proceeded from God, as well as that of *John* the Baptist his Forerunner. As for us, by whom this Authority is perfectly understood, and who know that the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, as well as that of *John* the Baptist, is Divine; we ought to submit our selves thereto, least the same Reproach should be likewise made to us: *Why do you not then believe it?* II. The Parable of the two Sons, signifies, that those People who were look'd upon as the most corrupt and vicious, had believed the Preaching of *John* the Baptist sooner than the *Pharisees* and the chief Men of the *Jews*, who being in Appearance the most learned and the most holy, ought likewise to have been the first in receiving it. This Parable is applicable to Sinners, who, being touch'd with Repentance, return to their Duty; and to bad Christians, who, having engag'd themselves to serve God, and to obey Him, break their Promises, and do not answer to their Calling. III. The Comparison of the Husbandmen denotes three Things. *First*, The Favours that God had shewn the *Jews* in choosing them for his People, and in sending to them his Servants several Times, and at last his own Son. *Secondly*, The Ingratitude and Naughtiness of the *Jews*, who, instead of acknowledg-

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ing these Favours, had rejected and persecuted the Prophets, and crucified the Lord of Life. *Thirdly*, That God would punish the *Jews* by destroying them, by taking away his Covenant from them, and by calling the *Gentiles* in their stead; and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chiefest of the *Jews*, should be exalted to supreme Glory, as it had been foretold by the Prophecy in the *cxviiith* Psalm. What this Parable typified, is exactly come to pass; the *Jews* having been destroyed and rejected, the Gospel declared to the *Gentiles*, and the Kingdom of God establish'd throughout the World. Thus God deprives both of his Favour and Gospel such as don't make a right Use thereof, nor produce the Fruits which He expects from them.

C H A P. XXII. 1,—22.

WHAT we are here about to read, contains, I. The Parable of the Marriage. II. What Christ answered the *Pharisees* when they asked Him, if it was lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Meaning of the Parable of the Marriage is, that the *Jews* had been first called to Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, but they had rejected it, and for that Reason would be destroyed; that afterwards God would offer that Favour to the *Gentiles*, that the *Gentiles* would receive it, and be admitted into his Covenant, but that there would be among those that came into the Church, Hypocrites, who should likewise receive the Punishment of their Crime. All that our Saviour foretold by this Simi-

Similitude has been fulfilled, the Divine Vengeance having fallen upon the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* having been called in their Room; by which we may discover the Divinity of the Gospel, and the Certainty of the Promises contained therein. Let us learn from hence, that God is very gracious to Men when He calls them to Salvation, and that those who don't take Advantage of the Invitations that God vouchsafes to make them, will not escape his Vengeance. Let us observe what was said to the Man who sat down to Table without a Wedding Garment; it denotes, that all such as live in the external Communion of the Church, are not true Members of it; but that God can discover the Hypocrites, who mingle themselves with Believers; and that accordingly, if we be not cloathed with a sincere Faith and Holiness, we shall not escape the Punishment due to our Hypocrisie. II. The Answer which Christ returned when He was ask'd, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, teaches us, that our Duty to Kings and Princes, and our Duty towards God, are both indispensable, and that neither of them are opposite to each other; but, on the contrary, they are perfectly consistent and agreeing; so that we are bound to submit our selves to the higher Powers, and to render them their Due, in such manner, nevertheless, as not to forget that our Duty to God challenges the first Place, and that we are always obliged first and chiefly to discharge the same.

C H A P. XXII. 23,—46.

CH R I S T does three Things here. I. The *Sadducees*, who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, having proposed to Him the Case of a Woman that had had seven Husbands, and in order to ensnare Him, having ask'd which of the seven she would belong to after the Resurrection; our Lord answers them, by saying, that there would be no such Thing as Marrying in the Life to come, and by proving from the Scriptures, that the Dead should rise again. II. He answers a Question put to Him by a *Scribe*, about the greatest Commandment of the Law. III. He asks the *Pharisees*, How the Messiah was at the same Time both the Son and Lord of *David*? To which they could not answer, and He did not think fit to explain it to them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N the Discourse which Christ held with the *Sadducees* about the Resurrection, we ought, I. To admire his Wisdom entirely Divine, and at the same Time, the Strength and Evidence with which He confounds them, and proves that the Dead shall rise again. Let us learn then from hence, that nothing is more certain than the Resurrection of the Dead, and that those who have been acceptable to God in their Life-Time, as the Patriarchs, are not annihilated by Death. Let us carefully retain this Doctrine, which is the Support of our Faith and of our Hopes; but we must likewise remember, that Christ has told us, that the Bands of Flesh and Blood shall not subsist any longer in the Life to come, and that the Blessed will

will not be any more subject to the Wants of the Body, or Necessaries of this Life, but will be like the Angels of God. Let us seriously reflect upon this, to the end that we may labour to become spiritual Men, and by living in a great Degree of Holiness, may attain at length to a happy Resurrection. II. Let us carefully impress upon our Minds this other Doctrine which Christ has inculcated so plainly and positively, *viz.* That the Abstract or Sum of all Religion is: *To love God with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as our Selves*; and let us thereby acknowledge, that our chief Care ought to be to fix in our Hearts this true Love of God, and of all Men. III. With respect to the Question which Christ put to the *Pharisees*, how the Messiah could be the Son of *David*? It must be observed, that He only proposed it to them, to make them sensible of their Ignorance, particularly in relation to the Person of the Messiah, and to the Nature of his Kingdom; but that He would not explain it to them, because they could not comprehend nor believe what He had said to them, and likewise because it was not convenient to speak openly of the Glory and Dignity of his Person at that Time; but this Question is very plain and obvious to us, who know that *Jesus Christ* was the Son of *David*, as Man; but that He is our Lord, as the Son of God, and that He is King of the World, and of the Church, which engages us to acknowledge and worship Him as such, and place our Glory in our Obedience and Subjection to Him.

C H A P. XXIII. 1,—22.

OUR Lord speaks against the *Pharisees* and *Scribes*. He owns all that is good and lawful in their Doctrine, and in their Ministry, but blames them for their Hypocrisie. He tells them they affected a great Appearance of Holiness, upon which account they made large Phylacteries, (which were Bands of Parchment, upon which they writ Sentences of the Law of *Moses*, and which the *Jews* wore for Devotion,) but that nevertheless they were filled with Pride, and that their only concern was how to be honour'd; He adds, that they rejected the Gospel, and hindered others from receiving it; He reproaches them with being Covetous and Wicked, and of making Religion and Prayer subservient to their Interest. He takes notice that their Doctrine about Oaths, was a Proof of their Ignorance, of the little respect they had for the Divinity, and of their detestable Avarice; forasmuch as they maintained and taught, that if a Man swore by the Gold, and by the Gifts that were offered in the Temple, and upon the Altar, the Obligation of his Conscience was stronger, than if he had sworn by the Altar, or by the Temple it self.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IT may be observed upon this Chapter in general, that our Lord drawing near his Death, did, with a holy Liberty, and with an Authority entirely Divine, rebuke the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* for their Wickedness and Hypocrisie; it being very necessary that He should make them known to the People for what they were.

were. The particular Reflexions that we are to make upon what has been read are, I. That it is a great Evil, when those who teach others, and ought to set them a good Example, are Impious and Hypocritical themselves; that nevertheless, when the Ministers of Religion and Pastors teach sound Doctrine, but lead ill Lives, we must not indeed imitate their Actions, but however, hear and obey them always when they preach the Truth. II. That the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, and particularly those to whom the Care of the Church is intrusted, ought to be wholly free from Hypocrisie, Ambition, and Covetousness, if they would not resemble those *Pharisees* whom our Lord cursed; that they themselves ought to walk in the Ways of God, and cause others to come in also, by contributing with all their Might to the Conversion of Sinners, and to the Edification of all Men. III. The Censure which Christ passes upon the Doctrine of the *Pharisees*, and upon the Articles of Swearing, shews, that an Oath ought to be held in great Reverence, since we thereby appeal to God himself; that Perjury, and the Breach of Vows, is a great Sin: And, *Lastly*, That we ought even to abstain from all kind of vain and rash Oaths.

C H A P. XXIII. 23,—39.

CH R I S T continues to reproach the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* with their Hypocrisie. He observes, that it appeared, that besides the Tythes that were prescribed by the Law, they gave likewise those of Herbs, and of every Thing that grew, which was more than God had commanded; but that nevertheless, they neglected those Duties that were of much greater Importance. He adds farther, that they

they observed a great deal of external Purity, but as for the internal, they were very corrupt; that they adorned the Tombs of the Prophets, but at the same Time persecuted the Servants of God. *Lastly*, He declares, that they did thereby draw upon themselves, and the whole *Jewish* Nation, the dreadful Judgments of God; and He laments, after a most tender Manner, the Destruction of *Jerusalem* which was coming upon them, because they did not lay hold of the Advantage of his Presence and Favour.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Curses pronounced by our Lord throughout this whole Discourse against Hypocrites, ought to inspire us with a strong Aversion and Abhorrence of Hypocrisie, as a Sin that is very odious in all Men, but chiefly in those that teach others, and that make Profession of Zeal and Godliness. **II.** We may here observe one of those Tokens whereby Hypocrites are known; it is by their affecting an outward Holiness, by being nice and scrupulous in Things of little Consequence, and by neglecting the most important Matters of Religion; such as Faith, Obedience, and Mercy, which God has commanded. Thus we ought chiefly to apply our selves to the Observation of those most essential Duties, to purifie our Hearts, and to settle in them Faith and a true Fear of God. Nevertheless, we are likewise taught by our Saviour, that although external Duties be not the most necessary, yet we must not omit nor despise them. The Threatenings which Christ makes against the *Jews*, who, after having murder'd the Prophets, would put Him to Death likewise, shews, that the
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Ingratitude of such as reject the Word of God and his Servants, will not remain unpunished. *Lastly*, The Tenderneſs wherewith our Saviour deplores the Ruine of the *Jews*, that had made ſuch ill Returns to his Goodneſs, proves very clearly, that God only deſires the Salvation of Men; and that if there are any who periſh, it is wholly through their own Fault.

C H A P. XXIV. 1,—28.

OUR Lord foretels the Deſtruction of the Temple of *Jeruſalem*; and being asked by his Diſciples, when it would happen, and what Signs ſhould precede ſuch Deſtruction, and the End of the World, answers them, that there ſhould ariſe falſe Prophets, who would call themſelves the Meſſiah; that there would be Wars, Famine, and all ſorts of Calamities; that his Diſciples would be Perſecuted, and that the Goſpel would be preached in ſeveral Parts of the World. He ſays moreover, that when the Abomination of Deſolation ſhould come into the holy Place, that is, when the Idolaters ſhould enter *Judea*, and beſiege *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, this would be a Sign that its Deſtruction was near; and that then People ſhould retire and fly away, that they might avoid the Miſeries which would fall at that Time upon the ſaid City, and upon the *Jewiſh Nation*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Predictions in this Chapter are applicable both to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and to the End of the World; and we muſt conſider, in the firſt Place, that all
that

that Christ foretold here, came to pass soon after his Ascension. For there did arise several false Messiahs, and several Impostors, who, under the Pretext of Zeal and Religion, seduced the *Jews*, and stirred up Seditions through all *Judea*. There were likewise Wars, in which an infinite Number of the *Jews* were destroy'd, and abundance of them carried off by Famine and Pestilence: The Apostles and Christians were Persecuted, the Gospel was Preached and Establish'd in several Countries, the *Romans* entred *Judea*, besieged *Jerusalem*, and demolish'd it with its Temple; and the Christians making use of the Warnings of our Saviour, retired from that City and were saved, whilst the *Jews* perished miserably. These great Events, and the exact Accomplishments of our Saviour's Predictions, do not suffer us to doubt of the Divinity of the Gospel. We see there a remarkable Instance of the Judgments of God upon Unbelievers, as well as of his Protection of the Faithful. *Finally*, This ought to convince us, that all that Christ said about the End of the World, and about the last Destruction of the Wicked, will be fulfilled in the like Manner. We should therefore at the Hearing of all these Things, strengthen ourselves in Faith and Holiness, and in the Expectation of the second Coming of *Jesus Christ* our Lord, who will come at the last Day to judge Men, and to render to all according to their Works.

C H A P. XXIV. 29,—51.

OUR Lord continues to speak of that which was to come to pass at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and at the End of the World. He says, that *the Sun and the Stars*
 F *should*

should be darkened; that is to say, that there would happen great Revolutions in the World, and in the State of the *Jews*; and that there would be seen on all Hands, Tokens of the Wrath of God, which would fill Mankind with Terror. He adds, that the *Sign of the Son of Man* would appear; which signifies, that Christ would manifest, after an illustrious and pompous Manner, by destroying the *Jews*, and establishing his Kingdom, that He was the Son of God. He declares that these Things should happen before the Generation that then was should pass away; that the exact Time and the Day of his Coming should be known to no Body, and that this Coming would surprise Men, as the Flood did the Inhabitants of the first World. *Lastly*, He recommends to his Disciples to watch, and to hold themselves always in readiness, that they might not be surprised when He came; upon which Occasion He proposes to them the Comparison of a vigilant and faithful Servant, and of an unfaithful one.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE must observe upon this, as well as upon the former Part of this Chapter, that all the Prophecies of our Lord were fulfilled at the Time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and particularly, that it happen'd as Christ had declared in express Words before the then Generation was pass'd away, being about Forty Years after his Death; which proves with the strongest Evidence, the Truth and Divinity of those Predictions; we may moreover consider, that as Christ came formerly to destroy the *Jews*, He will likewise return at the End of the World; that his Coming will be preceded
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by terrible Signs, that the Time of such Coming is concealed from us, as well as that of our own Death, to the end, that we might be continually prepared, and that that Day, so formidable to the Wicked, may not surprise us, as the Deluge did Mankind in the Time of *Noah*, nor as the *Jews* were surprised at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. Christ shews us himself that this is the Use we are to make of his whole Discourse, by the Similitude of the good and bad Servant ; and by the Exhortation denoting the End of the said Similitude, and of all that is contained in this Chapter : *Watch therefore, for you know not what Hour your Lord doth come.*

C H A P. XXV. 1,—30.

OUR Lord, after having spoken in the foregoing Chapter of his Coming, and having exhorted his Disciples to Watchfulness, continues his Discourse, and shews by the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and by that of the Talents, the Necessity of Watching, and of preparing for the said Coming.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Parable of the Virgins is taken from the Practice of the *Jews* at their Weddings, at which their Maidens were used to meet the Bridegroom and Bride with lighted Lamps ; and by this Parable Christ gave his Disciples to understand, that they were continually to expect, and be prepared for his Coming. The Wise Virgins represent the true Believers, that live in the Faith and Practice of all their Duties, and in the Expectation of our Lord's Coming ; and the Foolish Virgins represent the false

tChristians, who neglect those Duties. Christ teaches us here, that He will come to judge the World when He is least expected, and that then those that shall be found ready will be filled with Joy, and with a holy Confidence, and shall enter with Him into his Glory; He shews us on the other Hand, what will be the Misery and Despair of the Wicked, how earnestly they will wish to partake of the Happiness of the Righteous, and the vain Efforts they will make to be admitted thereto. We may observe *Three* Things upon the Parable of the Talents: *First*, That God calls Men to serve Him, and that He grants his Grace and his Gifts to some more, to others less; to the end that each of them may employ them according to his Calling, and the Measure he has received thereof, to the Glory of God, and Salvation of Men. *Secondly*, That some, like the faithful Servants, make a good Use of his Favours by their Zeal and Industry; and that others render them useless by their Negligence. *Thirdly*, That God will oblige both the one and the other to render an Account of their Behaviour; that He will praise and reward the Fidelity of those that have employ'd his Gifts in Promoting his Glory, and that those who have abused them, shall be punished for their Unbelief. And that they will be without excuse, because God never requires of Men more than they are able to perform. Thus, by each of these Parables, Christ teaches us after what manner He will judge those Men, to whom He has given the Knowledge of Himself; He warns us to adhere to our Duty with Constancy, and that each of us serve Him in our respective Vocations, to the end, that when He comes, He may say to us: *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

CHAP. XXV. 31,—46.

WHAT we are about to Read, contains the Description of the last Judgment.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard what Christ said about his last Coming, and of the universal Judgment. There are Four chief Things to be observed in the Description He makes thereof. The *First* is, That He will come down from Heaven with Glory, and that it is He who shall judge the World. *Secondly*, That all Men shall appear before Him, and all be judged by Him. The *Third* is, That He will judge them by their Works, and that He will chiefly have respect to the Works of Charity, and to the good that is done to his Members; because such Works are Arguments and Effects of Faith, and of the Love that we have for Him. The *Fourth* Thing is, That He will separate the Good from the Wicked, by receiving the Good into the Kingdom of Heaven, and casting the Wicked into Hell Fire. Since Christ has so expressly warned us of all these Things, and since we know that we must all appear before his Tribunal, to receive according to the Good or Evil we shall have done, let us behave our selves with Godliness and Fear during the Time of our Abode in this World; let us adhere to the Practice of good Works, and above all, to those of Mercy and Charity; to the end, that at the Day of the last and glorious Appearance of the Son of God, we may be free from that Terror and Despair which will then fall upon the Wicked, and appear before Him with Joy

and Confidence, and be of the Number of those to whom He shall say : *Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

C H A P. XXVI. 1,—35.

HERE begins the History of our Saviour's Passion; and St. *Matthem* relates, I. That the Priests formed a Resolution to put Christ to Death. II. That a Woman anointed our Lord with a precious Oil. III. That *Judas* bargained with the Priests to deliver up his Master to them. And, IV. That Christ celebrated the Passover, and that, during that Repast, He made mention of the Treachery of *Judas*; instituted the holy Supper, and foretold that St. *Peter* should deny Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Reflexion we have to make is, that *Jesus* knowing He was to be Crucified at the Feast of the Passover, repaired to *Jerusalem* at that Time; and that although the Priests did not intend to have put Him to Death during that Festival, yet it was the Will of God that He should then die, because it was the Time of Offering up the Paschal Lamb, which was the Type of Sacrificing our Lord, and to the end that the *Jews*, who came from all Parts upon that Account, might be Witnesses of his Death. II. What Christ said to defend the Action of that Woman, who anointed Him with a precious Balsam, shews us, that He accepts of whatever we do to testify our Love and our Respect for Him; this ought likewise to induce us to judge favourably of other Mens Actions, especially when proceeding from a good

good Principle; to imitate the Zeal of that Woman, in Honouring our Saviour by all possible Means: And, *Lastly*, to do good to the Poor. III. The Agreement of *Judas* with the Priests, is a Proof into what Crimes, and how great Obdurateness, Avarice will lead Men, and how careful we ought to be, that that Passion do not steal into, and root it self in our Hearts. IV. Let it be observed, that *Jesus Christ* foretold the Treason of *Judas*, and did it, that to the end he might make him sensible that his Design was known to Him, and to prevent him from engaging in it if it were possible, and moreover, that his Disciples might confess, that nothing could befall Him but what He had foreseen, and was contented to expose himself to. V. The Institution of the holy Supper, which Christ establish'd then, to be a Memorial of his Death to the End of the World, obliges us to hold that Sacrament in great Reverence, and to celebrate it in a Manner conformable to the Institutions of our blessed Redeemer. VI. Christ's Prediction, that St. *Peter* should deny Him, proves, that our Lord sees the Heart, and knows Futurity; and what He said to that Apostle, who answer'd Him with so much Assurance, should teach us, never to presume too much upon our own Strength, but to distrust our selves, and be continually upon our Guard against Temptation.

C H A P. XXVI. 36,—56.

IN this Part of the History of the Passion we see, I. What our Lord suffered in the Garden. II. How He was taken by *Judas*, and what happened upon that Occasion.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought most seriously to reflect upon what Christ suffered in the Garden, and especially the extream Sorrow and Terrors which he then felt. It was the Will of God that He should undergo all those Things, that it might appear He died for the Sins of Mankind. And we ought to judge, by the Condition to which our Saviour was then reduced, how great is the Horror of Sin, and how dreadful the Punishments will be which wicked Men are one day to suffer. Those humble and fervent Prayers which Christ made to God in his Agony, teach us to pray with Perseverance and Submission, especially when we are in Affliction. The Resignation of our Lord to the Will of his Father, is a Proof of his perfect Obedience to Him, and of his Love towards us, and ought to be a Pattern to us, to the end, that in what Condition soever He thinks fit to place us, we may always say to Him: *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* The Warning that Christ gave his Apostles, to watch and pray, lest they should sink under that great Temptation to which they were going to be exposed, is a most wholesome Advice, serving to teach us, that Watchfulness and Prayer are the principal Means to resist Temptation, and that we are overcome by them when we neglect those Means. In the manner by which *Judas* caused our Lord to be apprehended, we may see on one Hand, the Treachery of that wretched Disciple; and on the other, the Readiness and Chearfulness with which Christ exposed Himself to Death. The Action of St. *Peter*, who smote with his Sword one of those that came to apprehend Christ, is to be considered as the Effect of a rash Zeal; and the Rebuke that our Saviour gave that Apostle, is a Lesson to us never to proceed to Violence

olence upon any Occasion whatever. It likewise furnishes us with a noble Instance of the great Goodness, Patience, and Meekness of *Jesus Christ*; all which it is our Duty to imitate.

C H A P. XXVI. 57,—75.

WE see here, I. What happened when *Jesus* was brought before the Council of the *Jews* and there Condemned. II. The Fall and Repentance of *St. Peter*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH A T which is to be observed upon the Appearance of Christ before the Council of the *Jews* is, I. That notwithstanding all the Endeavours of the *Jews* to find out false Witnesses, with a Design to condemn Him, He could not be convicted of any Crime, and therefore was only condemned for acknowledging Himself the Son of God. In this we discover on one Hand the Hatred and Injustice of the *Jews*, and on the other, the entire Innocence of our Saviour. It is to be noted, II. With what Patience He suffered all the Injuries and Affronts, and all the unjust Treatment which He received from them; and it may cause us to remember what *St. Peter* said upon this Occasion: That *Christ* also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. III. What our Lord said to the *Jews*, when they condemned Him to Death, namely, that they should see Him coming in the Clouds of Heaven, deserves a particular Attention. Here we may observe *Jesus Christ* speaking as a King, and as the Son of God; and the Establishment of his Kingdom, as well as the Destruction of the *Jews*, did soon after verifie what He had fore-

foretold upon that Occasion; but it will be yet more perfectly fulfilled at his last Coming. IV. The Fall of *St. Peter*, who, after having been warned by our Lord, and after having protested that he would never renounce Him, did yet deny Him three Times, even with Imprecations and Oaths, is a sad Instance of humane Inconstancy and Frailty. We see thereby, that even those who have the best Intentions, may greatly fall when they are not fortified against Temptation; and that to secure our selves from it, it behoves us to stand upon our Guard, and to suspect our selves; to pray without ceasing, and to shun the Places, and avoid the Occasions that may draw us into Sin. But we must likewise consider, that if the Fall of *St. Peter* was great, his Repentance was quick and hearty, and that he bitterly bewailed his Fault. So ought we to do also when we happen to fall, and to rise quickly and atone for the same by the Tears of a sincere Repentance, and by a true Amendment of our Lives.

C H A P. XXVII. I, — 26.

WHAT we are about to read contains Two Things: I. *Judas* seeing that Christ was Condemned, acknowledged his Crime, and laid violent Hands upon himself. II. *Jesus* appeared before *Pilate*, the Governour of *Jerusalem*, who, after having made several Attempts to deliver Him, and to pacifie the *Jews*, did at last pronounce the Sentence of his Condemnation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Confession *Judas* made of his Crime, and his Tragical End, shew the Innocence

cence of our Lord, and how unjustly He was Condemned. It likewise discovers the State of a guilty Conscience, and the Horror of the Remorses, and of the Despair wherewith the Wicked are agitated when they become sensible of their Crimes, and are pursued by Divine Vengeance. The Use to which the *Jews* put the Money that *Judas* returned them, serves to perpetuate the Memory of this Event, as it was a Proof of the Injustice which they had committed, and it is a plain Accomplishment of the Prophecy of *Zachariah*. II. As to what happen'd before *Pilate*, it must be observed, that Christ owned in his Presence, as He had already before the Council, that He was the Messiah. Thus it is that we ought to assert Truth, even at the Peril of our Lives, as often as we are called thereto. We see moreover, in this History, the Rage of the *Jews*, which nothing was capable of Mollifying, and how they preferred the saving of a Murderer and a seditious Person, before *Jesus Christ*; the Innocence of our Lord may also be there observed, since it was acknowledged by *Pilate* himself; and particularly the Iniquity of that Judge, who, after a long Opposition, did yet yield to his Death at last, notwithstanding the Warnings He received from his Wife, and tho' he was persuaded that he condemned an innocent Man. We have therefore an Example in *Pilate*, of those that Sin against Light, and that sacrifice their Duty and their Conscience to Fear, Compliance, and Interest; as well as of those that think themselves Guiltless when they commit the greatest Crimes, and that throw upon others the Blame of such Actions whereof they themselves are the Authors. This teaches us to adhere always inviolably to our Duty, and to pursue with Courage and Steadiness the Moti-

Motions of our own Conscience, without suffering any Consideration whatever to turn us aside. As for what relates to the *Jews*, we ought most seriously to reflect upon these Words of theirs: *His Blood be on us, and on our Children.* Both they and their Posterity have found the Effects of this Imprecation which they made against themselves, God having revenged the Death of his Son upon that guilty Nation, by the Destruction of their City, and by that miserable Condition in which they have ever since remained.

C H A P. XXVII. 27,—65.

WE see here, I. The Crucifixion and Death of *Jesus Christ*. II. The wonderful Things that then happened. III. His Burial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **A**fter having heard the Relation of our Saviour's Passion, and seen what Contempt and Pain He was exposed to before his Crucifixion, and whilst He was upon the Cross, we ought to consider, that He suffer'd all these Things for the Expiation of our Sins, and to confirm, by his Death, the Promises He has made us of Life Everlasting. The Use we are to make of this important Passage of the Gospel is, to consider that Death as the wonderful Means whereby God has saved us; to praise his Mercy in Delivering up his Son to Death, and the Love of our gracious Saviour in giving Himself for us; let us therefore love Him as He has loved us, and seek our Salvation in Him only. The Sufferings of Christ ought likewise to make us renounce Sin, since He died to destroy it;

it; and teach us also to suffer, and to bear our Cross with Patience. II. The several Prodigies that happen'd at his Death, betoken the Horror of the Crime which the *Jews* had then committed. God was likewise pleased to shew thereby, that *Jesus Christ* was his Son, that the Worship of the *Jews* was drawing to an end, and their Temple going to be destroy'd, and that Heaven should thenceforwards be open to Men. Particularly, the Rending of the Sepulchres of those who rose with our Lord, denoted, that *Jesus* should come out of his Tomb, and that the Dead should rise at the last Day by the Efficacy of his Death. III. With respect to the Burial of our Lord, we may consider, that He was interred, to the end that People might be more fully satisfy'd that He was really dead; and that He was put into a Sepulchre, where none had yet lain, to shew, that it was He himself that arose from thence. The Circumstances of his Burial, as well as those of his Passion, disclose to us the Accomplishment of several Prophecies. And the Opinion that Christ has been buried, is very proper to soften the Horror of our Death and Burial, which we should otherwise have conceived of it. *Lastly*, It is a thing worthy to be noted, that the *Jews* caused our Lord's Sepulchre to be so strictly closed and watched, because, contrary to their own Intentions, they furnish us thereby with undeniable Proofs of his Resurrection.

C H A P. XXVIII.

IN this last Chapter of the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, we see, I. The Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*. II. What the *Jews* did to persuade the People that his Disciples had taken away his Body. III. Christ appearing to the Apostles, and the Directions He gave them before He ascended into Heaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E R E are three Principal Considerations to be made upon the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*. I. That God's sending his Angels to take Him out of the Sepulchre, is an undeniable Proof that He is the Son of God. II. That that Resurrection was a certain Fact attested by Angels, by the Women that saw our Saviour, and afterwards by the Apostles, and by a great Number of other Persons. III. And above all, that the Resurrection is the Foundation of our Salvation, and of all our Hopes, since we are thereby fully assured, that we are reconciled to God, and that we shall rise again at the last Day. What the chief Men among the *Jews* did to persuade the People that Christ's Disciples had taken away his Body, discovers the extream Malice and invincible Obstinacy of his Enemies; but all their Precautions are vain, and what they feared did not fail to happen; thus God confounds the Wicked and their Designs. *Lastly*, What our Saviour said to his Apostles, of the supreme Power to which He was about to be exalted, the Orders He gave them to preach and to baptize, and the Promise He made of being with them to the End of the World, ought all to be seri-

seriously considered. Christ spoke then to his Disciples as King of the World, and shewed plainly that his Doctrine was going to be spread over all the Earth, and that his Church should subsist for ever. The Success of the Preaching of the Apostles, and the Establishment of the Christian Religion, proved afterwards, and does still prove the Truth of these last Words of our Lord; and they are so many powerful Motives to induce us to believe in Him, to confess the Divinity of his Doctrine, and to reverence the Baptism which He has instituted, and by which we are consecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to adore his Power, and to keep all his Commandments. May He himself give us Grace to do it. *Amen.*





St. MARK;



C H A P. I. 1,—20.



HIS Gospel was writ, some Time after that of St. *Matthew*, and, as it is thought, about Ten Years after Christ's Ascension, by St. *Mark*, under the Inspection of the Apostle St. *Peter*. In the first Part of this Chapter, the Evangelist treats, I. Of the Ministry of *John* the Baptist. II. Of the Baptism of our Lord. III. Of his Temptation. IV. Of the Beginning of his Preaching in *Galilee*. And, V. of the Call of some of the Apostles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Mark* shews us, at the Beginning of his Gospel, I. That *John* the Baptist was sent from God, conformable to what was foretold of him by the Prophets, to declare the Manifestation of the *Messiah*, and of the Kingdom of God, by preaching Repentance, and baptizing those that confessed their Sins, and by warning the

the People that the *Messiah* was about to appear. God was pleased thereby to prepare the *Jews* for the Reception of *Jesus Christ*, and to teach them that the Kingdom of the *Messiah* would be a spiritual Kingdom, and that he came into the World to establish Holiness therein, and to turn Men to God; so that we ought to look upon Repentance and Amendment of our Lives, as the Design of our Lord's Coming; and this is what He himself has taught us, having begun his Ministry by preaching Repentance and Faith: Saying, *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* II. What happened at the Baptism of *Jesus Christ*, and the Voice which God caused to be heard from Heaven, tended to make known to *John* the Baptist, and to the People, that *Jesus* was the Son of God, and the *Messiah*; and it obliges us to receive his Doctrine with Obedience and Faith. III. It was likewise to shew, that He was really his Son, that God was pleased to suffer Him to be tempted in the Desert, and that after his Temptation, the Angels came to minister to Him. IV, and V. *Lastly*, The Choice which our Lord made of some Fishermen to be his Apostles, shews that He came not to establish a temporal and worldly Kingdom, since those People had nothing whereby to distinguish themselves in this World; this likewise proves, that the wonderful Effects of his Ministry proceeded not from them, but that the whole Glory thereof is to be given to God alone.

C H A P. I. 21,—45.

ST. *Mark* relates several Miracles that Christ wrought in *Galilee* at the beginning of his Ministry. I. The Cure of a Man possessed by an

an unclean Spirit. II. That of St. Peter's Mother in Law, and several other diseased Persons. And, III. *Lastly*, that of a Leper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO read with Advantage the History of the several Miracles of *Jesus Christ*, we should observe concerning them, I. That divine Power whereby He drove away Devils, and healed in an Instant, and by his Word only, all kind of Diseases. II. His Goodness and Love towards Men appeared in those Miracles, since He only exerted his Power for the doing of Good. III. We may consider, that these Miracles tended to prove that He was the Son of God, and that his Doctrine was true, and divine; and this was the Reason why He did not work them commonly, but in favour of such who believed that He was able to do them, and who desired the same. IV. That He nevertheless took all the care He could, that those Miracles should not make too great a Noise; this He did upon prudential Reasons, least those among the *Jews*, that own'd Him for the *Messiah*, should have raised Commotions and Tumults in order to declare Him King, according to the Belief they then had, that the *Messiah* should be a Temporal King. All these Things ought to convince us of the Divinity of the Gospel, and that Christ is a charitable Saviour, and full of Goodness. And, *Lastly*, to teach us that it is only by Faith and Prayer we can obtain his Favour. It must be observed particularly upon the Healing of the Leper, that our Lord order'd him to shew himself to the Priest, and to offer what the Law directed in those Cases; this He did to let the *Jews* see, that He ob-

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served all that was ordered by the Law of God, and also to convince them that the Man was really cured.

C H A P. II.

I. **C**H R I S T cures a Paralytical Person. II. Calls St. *Matthew* to the Office of an Apostle. III. He gives his Reasons why He eat with Sinners, and why He did not oblige his Disciples to Fast, like those of *John* the Baptist. IV. He returns an Answer to the *Pharisees*, who blamed his Apostles for plucking the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE see here, I. In the Cure which our Saviour wrought upon the Man that was sick of the Palsie, that He had respect to the Faith of those who brought the Man to Him; and that He declared at the same Time that his Sins were forgiven. From whence it appears, that besides the Power of Healing Distempers, Christ had also that of forgiving Sin, which obliges us to consider Him, not only as a great Prophet, but likewise as our Judge, and as Him from whom we may expect Health to our Souls, and Pardon of our Offences, by the Means of Faith and Repentance. II. We learn from this Chapter, that our Lord is come into the World to call Sinners to Repentance, which He gave to understand by eating with Publicans, and such other Persons as the *Jews* looked upon to be great Sinners. This Doctrine ought to fill us with trust, and at the same time make us acknowledge, that it is absolutely necessary to repent, and amend our Lives, if we would be saved. III. We must consider with

respect to the Business of Fasting, that altho' Christ did not subject his Disciples to the regular Fasts, such as those observed by the Disciples of *John* the Baptist, or by the *Pharisees*, yet it was not that He condemned Fasting, but it was for the same Reasons for which He himself did not lead so rigid and retired a Life as *John* the Baptist; namely, because his Ministry obliged Him to go from Place to Place, and converse with all kinds of People. But He declared however, that his Disciples should be called afterwards not only to Fastings, but to great Sufferings; and that if they were not called thereto even then, it was to spare their Weakness; and this is the Meaning of the Parable of old Cloth, and of old Bottles for Wine. IV. We see, *Lastly*, That Christ justifies the Action of his Disciples, who, being prest with Hunger, pluck'd the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, upon which occasion He quoted what *David* did in a like Case. This teaches us, that in extream Necessity, and when the external Duties of Religion can't be observ'd but with great Inconvenience or Evil, they may be dispens'd with, provided it be not out of Contempt, and that we never violate the Essentials of Religion, it being nothing but Hypocrisie and Superstition to act otherwise.

C H A P. III.

TH E Evangelist relates, I. The Healing of a Man whose Hand was wither'd, and of several other diseased Persons. II. The Calling of the Twelve Apostles. III. What Christ said to the *Pharisees*, who ascribed his Miracles to the Power of the Devil. IV. His Declaration, that his true Disciples were as dear to Him as his own Kindred.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE continue to observe the great Goodness and Sovereign Power of our Lord, in the several Miracles mention'd in this Chapter, which is very proper to confirm our Faith, and to fill us with Confidence in Him. We see, I. in particular, with respect to the Cure wrought upon the Man whose Hand was withered, the great Blindness and Malice of the *Pharisees*, who were scandaliz'd at Christ's healing the Sick upon the Sabbath-Day; as also how He reduc'd them to silence, and lamented their Obstinacy and Hypocrisie. II. The Choice our Lord made of the Twelve Apostles to be with Him, and the Power He gave them to work Miracles, like to those done by Himself, must be look'd upon as an effect of his great Wisdom, as well as of his Goodness towards all Men, since He was afterwards to make use of the Ministry of those Apostles, that caused the Gospel to be preach'd throughout the World. III. The Wickedness and Blasphemy of the *Pharisees*, who affirm'd that Christ was possess'd with a Devil, and perform'd his Miracles by the Help of the Prince of the Devils, is an Example to prove, that when once Men have abandon'd themselves to their Prejudices and Passions, they are harden'd against all that can be offer'd to them, though never so clear, and never so strong; and that instead of yielding, they become yet more Headstrong and Wicked. And the terrible Punishment our Lord denounc'd against the *Pharisees* shews, that the Conversion of such as thus resist the Truth and the Holy Ghost, becomes at last impossible, and that God will punish them with the greatest Severity. IV. Our

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Lord's declaring that He loved his true Disciples as much as his nearest Relations, teaches us, that the surest Means of being loved by Him, is to set our selves to hear his Word, and to do his Will; and that we likewise, in Imitation of Him, ought particularly to cherish those Persons that fear God, and to esteem them preferably to all others.

C H A P. IV. 1,—26.

TH E first Part of this Chapter is taken up with the Parable of the Seed, and its Explanation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Explanation which *Jesus Christ* himself has given to the Similitude of the Seed, sets it in a perfect Light, and denotes the Meaning and Use thereof. This is what the Saviour of the World has thought fit to teach us by it: The Seed that fell upon the Way, represents those who hear the Gospel, but do not receive it, nor are affected with it. The Seed that fell upon Rocky Places, denotes those who receive the Word of God only for a Time, but in Persecution and Temptation forsake Christ. The Seed that fell among Thorns, and was thereby choaked, is the Type of those in whom this Word would produce Fruit, if their Heart were not taken up with the Love of the good Things and Pleasures of the World, and with the Cares of this Life. And the Seed sown in good Ground, describes those who have a good and well-disposed Heart, and in whom the Gospel produces Fruit and wholesome Effects. Now it is our Duty to examine our selves, and to try whether we are of the Number of those

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harden'd ones, upon whom the Word of God makes no Impression; or of those inconstant and cowardly ones, who, after having been affected, do not persevere; or of those carnal or worldly ones, in whom the Word is render'd unprofitable, by the Love of the good Things and Pleasures of this Life; or, *Lastly*, of those faithful Hearers, who bring forth in Abundance the Fruits which God expects from them. Let these Divine Instructions take Root in our Heart, and as Christ himself has exhorted us, let us take heed to the manner how we receive them, always remembering, by what has been said, that God increases his Lights and Gifts in those that make a right Use of them; but that He takes them away from such as abuse them, or that do not improve thereby.

C H A P. IV. 26, — 41.

THIS Chapter contains Two Things. I. The Parable of the Seed cast into the Earth, and at length producing its Fruit: And that of a Grain of Mustard. And, II. Christ's laying the Storm.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Design of our Lord by the Similitude of the Seed thrown into the Earth, and growing by little and little; and by the other, of a Grain of Mustard, was to shew, that notwithstanding there was no great Appearance at that Time that his Doctrine should make any considerable Progress, by reason of his own lowly State, and the small Number of those that receive the same, yet it would soon be spread throughout the whole

Earth, by the Means of the Preaching of the Apostles. Christ expressed these Things in Parables, because He would not then declare openly that his Gospel was to be preached to other Nations, for fear of shocking and scandalizing the *Jews*: but these Parables were very obvious and plain afterwards, by the Establishment of the Christian Religion, so that they do now furnish us with invincible Proofs of the Truth of the Gospel. II. In the History of the Miracle which our Saviour wrought by calming a Tempest, we may observe the great Concern of the Apostles, who were afraid of Perishing, though *Jesus* was in the midst of them; which shewed, that their Faith was still weak, as He himself reproach'd them. We may likewise discover therein his Goodness towards them, and that wonderful Power, which turn'd their Fear into Astonishment, and fill'd them with Joy and Admiration. The Use we are to make of this History is, that though God suffer his Church, and his Children, to be exposed to the utmost Dangers, we ought never to be discouraged, because God does it to try our Faith; and that we need fear nothing, provided the Lord be with us; and that He is always ready to deliver us when He sees fit.

C H A P. V. 1—20.

TH E Evangelist relates a most remarkable Miracle which our Saviour wrought, by delivering a Man possessed with a Legion of Devils.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS History does very much deserve our Attention. We may observe here, in a most sensible manner, the Power which the Devils exercised in those Ages, by the Permission of God, over Mankind; but we see likewise, that Christ had a Sovereign Authority over them; that He came to destroy the Kingdom of the Devil; and that He was always ready to display his Power in Favour of such as wanted his Assistance. Our Lord, after having deliver'd this Demoniack, gave the Devils leave to enter into the Swine, and to hurry them headlong into the Sea, that it might appear that this Man was really possess'd, and to prove the Truth and Greatness of the Miracle which He had wrought; it was likewise to shew, that the Devils could do nothing but by his Permission. *Lastly*, This must be look'd upon as a Trial and a Chastisement of the Inhabitants of those Parts, who, as the History informs us, would not bear our Saviour among them. This obliges us to thank God, that since the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, the Devil has not the same Power as he had formerly over Mankind. As to the rest, we may consider, that as sad and deplorable as was the Condition of this Demoniack, yet it was by no means so dreadful as that of Sinners, who abandon themselves to Evil, and who are Slaves to the Devil and their own Passions; since this Man did not fall into this sorrowful Condition by his own Fault, and that besides, the Devil could only hurt his Body, whereas Sinners do, of their own accord, become his Slaves, by performing his Will, by which means, this Enemy
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of God and Man, draws their Souls into the Abyss of everlasting Destruction.

C H A P. V. 21,——43.

ST. *Mark* relates Two Miracles of Christ. I. The Healing of a Woman of an Issue of Blood. And, II. the Raising from the Dead the Daughter of *Jairus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

BESIDES the general Reflexions that we ought to make upon all the Miracles of our Saviour, those that are related in this Chapter, engage us to consider chiefly the Two following Things. I. The Example of that Woman, whose Faith our Lord commends, and who was healed by touching the Hem of his Garment, proves, that Humility and Faith have a great Efficacy, that Trust in *Jesus Christ* is never vain, and that He is always ready to extend his Favours to those that apply themselves to Him in such Dispositions. II. We see in this Miracle, the great Power of our Lord; but it appears yet with much more Lustre, in the Resurrection of the Daughter of *Jairus*; upon which it must be observed, that Christ did not only heal the Sick, but that He likewise restored Life to the Dead; whereby He did both display his infinite Power, and confirm the Promises which He has made of raising us up at the last Day. Thus the Consideration of this Miracle is of a very great Efficacy to produce in us a firm Hope of the Immortality of the Soul, to fill us with Comfort in the Expectation thereof, and to encourage us more and more to the Study and Practice of Piety and good Works, to the end, that we may one Day partake

take of that same blessed Resurrection which Christ has promised, and which we wait for.

C H A P. VI. 1,—29.

WE have here an Account, I. Of our Saviour's Arrival at *Nazareth*, and of the Unbelief of the Inhabitants of that Town. II. Of the Mission of the Twelve Apostles to *Judea*. III. Of the Death of *John the Baptist*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Reflexions which we ought to make upon the Three above-mention'd Heads: I. The first relates to the Unbelief and Ingratitude of the People of *Nazareth*, who being so happy as to have our Saviour among them, did not acknowledge that the Wisdom and Power which were in Him proceeded from God, and made so ill a Use of his Presence, which was the Reason that He wrought few Miracles in that Place. Thus it is that the Prejudices and Wickedness of Men make them neglect the greatest Advantages, at the Time when they are offer'd to them; it likewise shews, that if God deprives them of his Grace, it is because they are so little sensible of it, and because they put Obstacles and Hindrances in their own Way. II. Upon the Mission of the Apostles it must be observ'd, that *Jesus Christ*, by an effect of his Wisdom and Goodness towards the *Jews*, sent the Apostles throughout *Judea*, to declare the Coming of the Kingdom of God; and to render their Preaching more effectual, He gave them the Power of doing Miracles, but forbade them to
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make any Provision for that Journey, because it was to be short, and to inure them early to rely upon Providence ; and He declar'd, that those who would not receive them, should be punish'd most severely ; whereby we see the Condemnation of those to whom God causes his Word to be preach'd, and who do not grow better by it. III. As to the Death of *John* the Baptist, it is to be attributed to the Hatred that *Herodias* bore him, because he condemned her Marriage with *Herod* ; and to the base Compliance of that Prince, who sacrificed *John* the Baptist, for whom he had otherwise a Veneration, to the Passion of that impudent Woman. In this Event we perceive, that vicious Persons commonly hate those who reprove them for their Disorderly Lives, and that very great Evils spring from Impurity, as well as from the Compliance which People shew for the Wicked, and from rash Oaths. It is nevertheless to be noted, that it pleased God to suffer *John* the Baptist to lose his Life after this manner, that the *Jews* might be prepared for that which was to befall our Lord, of whom this holy Prophet was the Forerunner. 'Tis likewise a Thing worthy of Attention, that *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, who do not believe a Resurrection, should imagine that *John* the Baptist was come to Life again ; this shews, that the Wicked and Unbelievers have no fix'd or settled Faith, that they are always in Fear, and that the Remorses with which their Consciences are tormented, make them sometimes fancy Things that have no Foundation, and which are contrary even to the Sentiments whereof they make Profession.

C H A P. VI. 30,—56.

I. **O** U R Lord feeds five Thousand People after a miraculous Manner. II. His Disciples being exposed to a Storm, He goes to them walking upon the Sea. III. He cures many Diseases after He arrived at the Country of *Genézareth*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

W E are here to observe, I. In the first Place, the Goodness of our Lord, who seeing the Condition in which the People were that followed Him, was moved with Compassion towards them; and with the Nourishment of the Soul, bestow'd upon them also that of the Body, by a wonderful Multiplication of the Loaves. II. He afterwards manifested the same Goodness, as well as Power, when his Disciples being in danger of Perishing by a Tempest, He went to them walking upon the Sea, and calmed the Rage thereof. This great Miracle tended to convince his Disciples more and more that He was the Son of God, and it ought to produce the like Effect in us, by causing us to admire the marvellous Power of our Lord, and by filling us with Trust in his Goodness. III. *Finally*, When we read that they brought to Christ from all Parts the Sick and Diseased, and that they were all healed, even by the bare Touch of his Garment, we ought to believe, that if He thus display'd his Power for the Comfort and Cure of those that were presented to Him, He is not less disposed to save all such as seek from Him the Cure of their Souls; and this should encourage us to have recourse
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with Confidence to our charitable Redeemer, to be assisted by him in all our Wants.

C H A P. VII. 1, — 23.

I. **T**HE *Pharisees* complaining that the Disciples of Christ did not wash themselves, according to the Custom of the *Jews*, He reproaches them for violating the Commandments of God, by teaching, that if a Child had consecrated and devoted to God those worldly Goods wherewith he might have assisted his Father or Mother, he was obliged strictly to fulfil such a Vow, nor was any longer at liberty to relieve his Parents in their Wants. II. He afterwards teaches the People and his Disciples what it was that defiled a Man, and what did not defile him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn from hence, I. That it is Hypocrisie scrupulously to practise Ceremonies and Customs establish'd by Men, and to violate the divine Laws and Duties which God has more expressly commanded; that the true Service of God consists in keeping his Commandments, but that He abhors the Worship of Hypocrites, who pretend to honour Him with their Mouths, and with the outside of Religion, whilst their Heart is defiled, and far from Him. II. This Discourse of our Saviour teaches us, that it is the Will of God that Children should honour and assist their Parents, and that nothing can excuse them from this Duty. III. That those Oaths and Vows, whereby People oblige themselves to do things contrary to the Law of God, do not bind the Conscience, and that it would be a Sin to perform them.

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But above all, Christ teaches us now, that what defiles us before God, is properly that which proceeds from the Heart, such as evil Thoughts, impure and unrighteous Desires; the Hatred of our Neighbour; Envy, Pride and Haughtiness, and other Passions of the like Nature: That these evil Thoughts are real Sins, being the Spring of all the wicked Actions that Men commit. Let us *carefully attend* to these things, as Christ does here exhort us; and let us *understand them well*, to the end, that our main Care may be, to avoid that which defiles the Soul, and to acquire Purity of Heart and Conscience.

C H A P. VII. 24,—57.

ST. *Mark* relates here Two Miracles of our Lord. I. The Healing the Daughter of a *Canaanitish* Woman. And, II. that of a Man that was Deaf and Dumb.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first of the Miracles which we have here read, has this singularity in it, that it was done in Favour of a Woman who was a Gentile, for which Reason it was that *Jesus* refus'd at first to grant her Request, telling her, it was not fit to give the Childrens Bread to Dogs; that is, to work those Miracles in favour of the *Gentiles*, who were Strangers, which Christ only did for the sake of the *Jews*, that were the People of God, and as the Children of the Family. Our Lord used this Language, because the *Gentiles* were not to be admitted into the Divine Covenant during his Abode in the World. But that Woman obtain'd at last of Him, by her profound Humility, Perseverance, Faith,

Faith, and Zeal, the Favour which she desired of Him. We may see by this History, that the Heathens were not excluded from the Grace of God, and that they were to be soon received into it, as well as the *Jews*. We see likewise, that Prayers, attended with Humility and Zeal, have a great Efficacy; that if they don't obtain for us at first all that we desire of God, He deals thus with us, to stir us up, and to give us more lively Sentiments of our own Unworthiness, but that at last we obtain every thing of Him by Perseverance. II. *Finally*, We discover in this other Miracle of Healing the Deaf and Dumb Man, the Facility and Authority wherewith Christ cured all Sorts of Diseases, and that great Charity which induced Him, upon all Occasions, to comfort and assist the Miserable, and to do good to all the World.

C H A P. VIII. 1,—20.

I. **C**H R I S T feeds miraculously Four Thousand Persons. II. He refuses to give a Sign, which the *Pharisees* require of Him. And, III. warns his Disciples to beware of the Leaven of the *Pharisees*, and of *Herod*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO make a right Use of what we have read, we ought, I. To admire the wonderful and gracious Manner wherewith our Lord fed several Thousand Persons; whereby he was pleased not only to provide for the Nourishment of their Bodies, but likewise to dispose them to receive from Him the true Food, which is that of the Soul. This Miracle has one thing particular

ticular in it, namely, that a great Multitude of People were witnesses to it, and sensible of its Effects; and that the Apostles were fully convinced of its certainty, by the Remnants of Bread wherewith they filled seven Baskets. II. We see that the *Pharisees* having desired of our Saviour to shew them a Sign from Heaven, He would not gratifie them therein. His usage of them in that Matter was very just, since that having already done so many other Miracles, of which they had made no Advantage, such a Sign could have served for nothing, nor would they be affected therewith. When God has done enough to convince Men, and to persuade them that they resist his Will, He is not bound to do any more, and it would be in vain for Him to employ new Means; so He justly leaves them to their Blindness and Unbelief. III. As for the Warning our Lord gave his Disciples against the Leaven of the *Pharisees*, and the Leaven of *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, it was as much as to say, that they should forsake the Doctrine of the *Pharisees*, who were Hypocrites, and only adhered to the Traditions and External of Religion; and the impious Opinions of the *Sadducees*, that denied the Resurrection, and maintain'd other pernicious Errors. We ought to observe here, the Wisdom and Goodness of Christ, who took an occasion from his Disciples forgetting to provide Bread for their Journey, to give them that Instruction. And this teaches us to avoid, with the utmost Care, all kinds of false Doctrines, and dangerous Notions, and especially of such as may lead us on one Hand to Superstition and Hypocrisie; or, on the other, to Irreligion and Infidelity.

C H A P. VIII. 22,—33.

THIS Part of the eighth Chapter contains Four Heads. I. Christ cures a blind Man. II. He asks his Disciples what Opinion the People had of Him, and what they themselves thought of Him; whereupon St. *Peter* confessed Him to be the Son of God. III. Our Lord foretels his Death. IV. He exhorts his Disciples to be prepared for Sufferings, and to make an open Profession of the Gospel before Men; to engage them to which, He shews them, that it was the only Means to avoid the Loss of their Souls.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N the Healing of the blind Man, there is this particular, *viz.* That our Lord would not heal him all at once, but did it by degrees. He proceeded in that manner, to try his Faith, and to inflame his Zeal, to demonstrate his Power to him in a more sensible Manner by the Progress of his Cure, and to let the People see, that in not working his Miracles after the same Manner always, He could display the Divine Power that was in Him, either all at once, or by little and little; which shews, that He was Master of working Miracles, according as He thought convenient. II. We see in the second Place, that Christ was esteemed among the *Jews* as a great Prophet, but that St. *Peter* and the other Apostles look'd upon him as the Son of God. It is likewise what all of us ought to believe in our Heart, and confess with our Mouth, if we would be saved. Nevertheless, our Lord forbids his Disciples to publish that He was the Messiah, because He was not to take up-
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on Him openly that Character before his Death. III. Upon the Prediction which Christ made of his own Death, it is to be observ'd, that He warned his Disciples thereof, that they might be prepared gradually for that Event, and understand the Necessity of it. Upon which account it was, that He so severely rebuked St. *Peter*, who being possess'd with the Jewish Prejudices, could not be persuaded that the Messiah was to die. But what this Apostle could not comprehend at that Time, is plain to us, who know that the Death of Christ is the Means that God has been pleased to use for our Redemption. IV. And, *Lastly*, Christ has now taught us, that those who would be his Disciples, must deny themselves, and be prepared to suffer; that there is nothing of so great Importance to us, as to lose or save our Souls; and that we ought to make an open Profession of Godliness and Truth, if we would have Him own us for his Disciples, and if we desire to be received into his Glory when He comes to judge the World. These are most wholesome Instructions, and powerful Motives to make us discharge the Duties of Christianity. Let us beseech the Lord that they may sink deep into our Hearts. *Amen.*

C H A P. IX. 1,—29.

THIS Part of the ninth Chapter contains Three Things: I. The Transfiguration of *Jesus Christ*. II. The Explanation which He gave to his Disciples of the Prediction that *Elias* was to come first. III. The Healing of the Lunatick, whom the Apostles could not cure.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HIS is what we should consider upon the Transfiguration of our Lord: Namely, that He appeared in his Glory in the Presence of his Apostles a little before his Death, that He might strengthen their Faith, which was like to be shaken thereby, and fully convince them that He was the Son of God. The Apparition of *Moses* and *Elias* shewed, that *Jesus* was he of whom the Prophets had foretold the Coming, and that He far excelled the greatest of the Prophets. The Voice which God caused to be heard from Heaven upon that occasion, teaches us, that our Lord is that great Prophet, whom we are bound to hear, and likewise to obey. This Transfiguration of Christ is, as to the rest, an image of the Glory wherein He shall appear at the last Day; and the Presence of *Moses* and *Elias* proves, that those holy Men lived after their Death, and that there is a State of Happiness reserved for the Righteous after this Life. II. We may observe further, that *John* the Baptist is that *Elias* who was to come, according to the Prophecy of *Malachi*; and that the Name of *Elias* was given to him, because, like that Prophet, he was to reform the Manners of Men, and to establish the Service of God. This obliges us to acknowledge the Truth of the Prophetical Oracles, and the Dignity of the Person of *John* the Baptist, to reflect seriously upon the Design of his Ministry, and the Obligation we lie under to make a good Use thereof, and better than the *Jews* have done. III. In the Cure of the Lunatick, we may remark, that the Faith of the Apostles was as yet very weak; but that our Lord seeing the Condition of the young Man, and having re-
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spect to the Faith and Tears of his Father, healed him. The chief Instruction this Example and Christ's Discourse gives us, relates to the Efficacy and Necessity of Faith, as well as to that of Prayer and Fasting. These Means being not less necessary to resist Temptation, and to the good of our Souls, than they were formerly to work or obtain Miracles.

C H A P. IX. 30, — 51.

I. **O**UR Lord warns his Disciples of his approaching Death. II. He answers them, upon the Disputes among themselves, of who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of the Messiah, and teaches them Humility, by placing a little Child in the midst of them. III. St. John having acquainted Him that they had seen a Man casting out Devils in his Name, and that they had forbid him, because he did not follow them; he told them, that they ought not to have opposed that Man, nor discourag'd any of those that believed on Him. IV. He exhorts them, *Lastly*, to avoid every thing that might be a Scandal, or an occasion of Falling, either to themselves or others, threatening such as do not avoid Offences with the Pains of Hell, and He exhorts them to live together in Peace and Unity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE must consider what is said here, namely, I. That the Apostles could not comprehend that our Lord was to die. And, II. The Dispute that arose among themselves, who should be greatest in the Kingdom of the Messiah, as an effect of the Opinion they had taken up, that his Kingdom should be a Tempo-

ral Kingdom. Christ undeceiv'd them, by setting before them a little Child, the Design of which was, to inspire them with humble Sentiments, and to teach them not to prefer themselves to others, nor to despise any one. This Lesson concerns all Christians, who ought to banish from their Hearts all proud and haughty Thoughts, and to become like Children in Meekness, Innocence, and Humility. III. 'Tis in the same View that our Lord reproves his Disciples, because they hinder'd a Man who did not follow them, from casting out Devils in the Name of *Jesus Christ*. From thence we ought to learn, not to reject any of those who make Profession of loving the Lord, and believing in Him. This is what He shews yet more expressly, by saying, that it is a very great Sin to despise or offend any of his Disciples, even though they should betray some Weakness, whereby they might appear contemptible to the World. IV. And *Lastly*, our Saviour strongly exhorts us, and with the severest Threatnings, to withstand every thing that may cause us to Sin, to renounce bravely whatever is most dear to us, to mortifie our Inclinations, and even to undergo the greatest Troubles, rather than to fall our selves, or to make others fall into Sin, and thereby expose our selves and them to be cast into Hell, where the Worm does not die, nor is the Fire ever quenched.

C H A P. X. 1,—31.

CH R I S T does Three Things: I. He answers the *Pharisees*, who discours'd with Him about Divorces, and told them, that the Custom establish'd among the *Jews*, of putting away a Man's Wife for all kinds of Reasons, was
con-

contrary to the Institution of Marriage. II. He blesses young Children. III. He answers a rich young Man, who had asked Him what he must do to be saved; upon which occasion He says, that Riches would hinder many People from believing in Him; but that He would abundantly reward those that should forsake their Goods, and all that was dearest to them, to follow Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may make this general Observation upon what our Saviour says about Divorces and Marriage: That Divorces, as they were practised by the *Jews*, was an irregularity which God did not approve, but which however was tolerated, because of the carnal Humour of that People, and of their natural Inclination to Disobedience; but that these Divorces ought not to be suffer'd among Christians, no more than several other like Things which God bore with formerly. Christ teaches us afterwards, that the Laws of Marriage are inviolable, that they equally bind the Man and the Woman, and that He having settled them again upon the same Foot they were at the Beginning, nothing but Adultery can justify a Divorce, and the Liberty of Marrying again. II. The Ceremony of Imposition of Hands, which Christ practised with respect to little Children, and the Prayer He made for them, convinces us, that Children are dear to Him; that it is a Practice very conformable to his Mind, when we offer them to God by Baptism and Prayer; and that the Kingdom of Heaven is reserved for those who are Children in Innocence and Simplicity. III. We may learn from what passed between Christ and the rich young

Man, that to enter into Heaven, we must keep the Commandments of God ; and that besides, we ought sometimes to forsake Goods, and all that we possess in this World ; and that, in general, Christians ought not to set their Heart upon Riches ; and that if God bestows them upon us, we should employ them to charitable Purposes. We gather moreover from the Discourse of our Lord, that this Renunciation of worldly Goods, as hard as it may seem at first, is not impossible, no more than our other Duties ; and that those who shall have thus renounced the good Things of this Life, as the Apostles did formerly, shall be abundantly rewarded both here and hereafter. *Lastly*, The Example of the said young Man, who had something of Good in him, and for which Christ loved him, but who was scandalised and discourag'd when our Saviour told him, that he must dispose of his Goods, shews, that it may happen, that People who have good Intentions, and some good Qualities, cannot get so far as to be saved ; and that in particular, Riches are oftentimes great stumbling Blocks in their Way.

C H A P. X. 32,—53.

OUR Lord, I. warns his Disciples of his Death and Resurrection. II. Returns an Answer to *James* and *John*, who fancying, like the rest of the *Jews*, that the Messiah was to have a glorious Reign upon Earth, begg'd of Him the chiefest Dignities in his Kingdom. III. He restores Sight to a blind Man near *Jericho*.

Reflexi-

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may consider here in the first Place, that the Time of Christ's Death drawing nigh, He revealed more plainly to his Apostles, that He was to be Crucified, and to rise again, but that they could not comprehend it, because they expected to see their Master Reign on Earth with Glory. In this we discover on one Hand, the Wisdom and Goodness of our Lord, who was pleased thus to prepare his Disciples for that which was to befall Him; and on the other Hand, that those Disciples did still labour under great Prejudices; and that they knew not yet what He was to do to save Mankind. II. In the next Place, we must attend to what Christ said to St. *James* and St. *John*, to convince them, that instead of expecting to be raised to great Employments, they would be called to drink of the same Cup, and to be baptized with the same Baptism as He was; that is to say, to pass through very great Sufferings, and even to undergo Death itself; and that therefore they ought to be humbled, and to become the Servants of one another, after the Example of their Lord, who came only into the World to suffer, and to save Men by his Death. These Lessons, and this great Example of Humility, concern us as well as the Apostles, and we ought to set them continually before us, as the Rule of our Sentiments and of our Behaviour. III. And, *Lastly*, the Cure which our Lord granted to the blind Man, who implored his Assistance with so much fervour, is a fresh Proof of his Power and Goodness; and we may infer from it, that if He was so ready to assist the Unfortunate, He is yet more disposed to save all such as call upon Him with Zeal

Zeal and Humility, and that seek of Him both Health and Life.

C H A P. XI.

I. **J**ESUS CHRIST makes his Royal Entry into *Jerusalem*. II. He drives out of the Temple those that prophaned it, by selling Doves, and other Creatures, proper for the Sacrifices, and by Changing of Money. III. He causes the Fig-Tree to wither by his Word. And, IV. He answers the *Pharisees*, who required an Account of his Authority.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**T is to be observed, that our Lord made his Royal Entry into *Jerusalem* a few Days before his Death, to shew, that He was that glorious King, whose Coming the Prophets had promised, but which He avoided to declare publickly during his Life. But the Manner wherein He performed this Entry, riding upon a young Ass, shewed his Meekness and Humility, and was a Token that his Kingdom was not of this World. Now as we do much better understand the Glory of *Jesus Christ*, and the Nature of his Kingdom, than the People who waited on Him on that solemn Occasion, we are the more strongly engaged to rejoice and praise God for having sent us this great Saviour, and for the Manifestation of his Kingdom. II. The Action of our Lord in driving out from the Temple those that prophaned it, tended to make the *Jews* sensible of his Heavenly and Divine Authority; and it is likewise a Warning to us, that we should not prophane, either by Hypocrisie, Impiety, or Irreverence, the Places where God is worshipped and called upon.

upon. III. As for the Miracle of the wither'd Fig-Tree, Christ himself has taught us the End and Use thereof; which was to shew, that Faith and Prayer obtain all Things from God; but He likewise warns us, that Prayer must be made in the Spirit of Love, and that when we offer up our Prayers to God, we should previously forgive one another. IV. The Answer our Lord returned to the *Pharisees*, who asked Him whence He had his Authority, was to convince them that their Blindness and Unbelief were wilful, and that his Authority proceeded from Heaven, as well as that of *John* the Baptist; but we should be yet more guilty than those *Pharisees*, if knowing that *John* the Baptist and *Jesus Christ* were sent from God, and professing to believe the same, we should not submit our selves to the Doctrine which they preached, and above all, to the Authority of the Son of God, our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

C H A P. XII. 1,—27.

I. **C**H R I S T proposes the Parable of the Husbandmen. II. Answers the Question that was put to Him about paying Tribute to the Emperor. And, III. another Question which the *Sadducees* ask'd Him about the Resurrection.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Meaning of the Parable of the Husbandmen is, that the *Jews*, after having rejected and persecuted the Prophets, would put to Death the Son of God, for which Reason God would take away his Covenant from them, and destroy them, that He would cause the Gospel to be preach'd to the *Gentiles*,
and

and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chief among the *Jews*, should become the Head and King of the Church. There are Two Reflexions may be made upon this Parable: The *first* is, That all that *Jesus* had foretold, was fulfilled soon after by the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, by the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and by the Establishment of the Kingdom of our Lord. The *second*, That God will not fail to punish the Ingratitude and Unbelief of those that shall have despised the Gospel, and that don't bring forth the Fruits of Godliness and Holiness which He requires of them. II. We may see by the Answer that Christ made concerning the Tribute, that He discover'd the Snare which the *Pharisees* laid for Him, and avoided it, by saying to them, *Render unto Cesar the Things that are Cesar's, and unto God, the Things that are God's.* From hence we should gather, that we are bound to submit to the Authority of Kings and Princes, and to yield them all that is due to them, and likewise to acquit our selves inviolably of those Duties to which we are bound by our Religion to pay to God. III. And, *Lastly*, we see how our Lord confounded the *Sadducees*, who denied the Resurrection of the Dead. This Passage is very remarkable, Christ teaches us here, the Truth of the Resurrection, and the State of those that shall rise again; which ought to strengthen us in the Belief of this great and comfortable Truth, and induce us to imitate the Faith and Piety of the Patriarchs, of whom the Lord has declar'd himself to be their God, even after their Death; and it should likewise teach us to live after a pure and spiritual manner, to the end, that we may partake of the Glory of a happy Resurrection.

C H A P. XII. 28,—44.

THIS Part of the Twelfth Chapter includes Four Heads. I. Christ answers one of the *Scribes*, who asked Him which was the greatest Commandment. II. He asks the *Pharisees*, how the Messiah could be at the same time the Son and Lord of *David*. III. He condemns the Hypocrisie of the *Scribes*. IV. He praises the Offering of a poor Widow.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have here, I. a very important Lesson, namely, That the chief Commandment, and that which includes all the rest, is to love God with all our Heart, and to love our Neighbour as our selves; that this is all we can do most acceptable to God, and that it is worth more than all the Ceremonies, and all the external Duties of Religion. For which Reason we ought to labour above all Things to fix in our Hearts this Love of God and of our Neighbour. II. We ought to observe, that our Lord, in asking the *Pharisees* how the Messiah could be the Son of *David*, was minded to make them sensible of their Ignorance, but would not explain the Question which they could not answer, because they would not have believed what He said to them, and because He would not then speak openly of the Dignity of his Person; but this Question has nothing obscure in it with respect to us, since we know Christ is the Son of *David*, because as Man he is descended from him, but that He was his Lord as the Son of God, which obliges us to believe that He is really the *Messiah*, and to obey Him. III. The Reproaches that
Christ

Christ made to the *Scribes*, shew us, that Pride, Hypocrisie, and Covetousness, are most odious Vices, especially in those that teach others. IV. The Judgment which our Lord passed upon the Offering of a poor Widow, that cast two little Pieces of Money into a Chest, where they kept that which was given for the Use of the Temple, and for Divine Service, is a Proof that God does chiefly regard the Heart and Intention ; and that the Contributions and Alms of poor People, though they are of little Value, are as well received as those of the Rich, when the Poor give as much as their Poverty will allow them, and when they do it out of a Principle of Piety and Charity.

C H A P. XIII.

I. **C**H R I S T speaks of the Signs that were to precede the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the End of the World. He says there would arise false Prophets, and false Messiahs ; that there would be Wars, Famines, and all sort of Calamities ; that his Disciples would be persecuted, and the Gospel preached throughout the World. He foretels them, that the Idolaters should enter into *Judea*, and besiege *Jerusalem* ; that there would appear every where Tokens of the Wrath of God ; that then the Son of Man would manifest Himself in his Glory ; and that these Things should happen before that Generation passed away. II. He exhorts his Disciples to depart from *Jerusalem* at that time, to hold themselves ready, and to watch for his Coming ; and to induce them thereto, says, that the Time of such his Coming was uncertain.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Discourse of the Son of God offers to our Mind three principal Reflexions. I. That the Event did fully verifie all these Predictions of our Lord soon after He left the World, forasmuch as several Deceivers or Impostors appear'd in that Age; the *Jews* were afflicted with War, and all kind of Scourges; the Apostles and Christians were persecuted; the Gospel spread in several Parts of the World; *Jerusalem* besieged and destroy'd by the *Romans*, and the Christians that came out of it preserv'd from that Desolation; and, *Lastly*, that all these Things happen'd before all the Men that lived in Christ's Time were dead, as He had positively foretold. All these are so many undeniable Proofs of the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel, and visible Tokens of the Divine Vengeance upon the *Jews*. II. This ought to convince us, that what Christ said no less positively about his last Coming, about the End of the World, the universal Judgment, and the Punishment of wicked Men, shall not fail to come to pass. III. The third Reflexion is, that the time of this Coming is unknown to us, as well as the time of our own Death, God having conceal'd it from us out of his Wisdom and Goodness; that therefore we ought to think upon it continually, and to prepare our selves for it by Prayers, by a pure Life, and by the Practice of all kind of good Works, serving God faithfully every one in his Calling, to the end that we be not surprized by that terrible Day. This is what our Lord himself exhorts us to by the following Expressions, which occur at the end of his Discourse, and which shew the Use and Design thereof: *Take heed to your selves, watch and pray,*

pray, for you know not when your Lord will come, and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

C H A P. XIV. 1,—31.

ST. *Mark* begins here the History of our Saviour's Passion, and relates, I. How a Woman anointed Him with a precious Oil. II. How *Judas* promised the *Jews* to betray his Master to them. III. The Celebration of the Passover the Evening before his Death ; and how, during Supper, He foretold the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Denial of Him by St. *Peter*, and the Institution of the Lord's Supper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us attend and meditate with great seriousness upon the History of our Saviour's Passion, and all its Circumstances. I. The first is the Action of that Woman, who poured on Him a precious Ointment. Since Christ commended that Action, and declared that the Remembrance of it should be perpetuated in the Church, we are obliged to take a particular notice of it, and to consider, that as our Lord commended the Zeal and good Intentions of that Woman, He will likewise approve all that we shall do for his Honour ; it likewise teaches us to avoid rash Judgments, and not to blame hastily and too easily the Actions of other People, when they may proceed from a good Principle ; and that we ought to take care of the Poor, and embrace every Opportunity of doing Good to them. II. The Example of *Judas* shews, that Covetousness blinds and hardens Men to such a degree, that it puts them upon committing all sort of Crimes. III. Since Christ foretold the

Treason

Treason of *Judas*, it appear'd from thence, that nothing was concealed from Him, that He knew the Hearts and Designs of Men, that He foresaw what was to happen to Him, and consequently, that all his Sufferings were voluntary. IV. Christ celebrated the Passover with his Disciples, according to the Custom of the *Jews*, to shew, that He strictly observed every thing that was prescribed by the Law of God; but He chiefly did it, because his Design was to ordain the holy Supper, and to substitute it to the *Jewish* Passover. This ought to inspire us with a very great respect for this Divine Ceremony, which our Lord has establish'd as a Memorial of his Death, and to engage us to celebrate it with Faith and Thanksgiving, conformably to his Intentions. Finally, The Prediction that St. *Peter* should deny Him, supposes our Lord to have an entire Knowledge of the Heart of Man; and what He said to that Apostle, who vowed he would never forsake Him, ought to fill us with a wholesome Distrust of our selves, and induce us to improve the Warnings which God gives us, and to seek in Humility, in Watching, and in Prayers, for that Constancy and Courage, so necessary to secure us against all the Surprises of Temptation.

C H A P. XIV. 32, — 52.

ST. *Mark* relates here, I. What Christ suffered in the Garden. II. How He was taken by the *Jews*, who were led by *Judas*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E extream Anguish which our Lord felt in the Garden, is one of the most remarkable Circumstances of his Passion. It discovers very plainly to us, that He suffered to atone for the Sins of Mankind; and we may judge from thence, how great is the Horror of Sin, and with what Despair the Wicked will be seiz'd when they undergo the Punishment due to their Sins. We ought next, in Imitation of *Jesus Christ*, who, in his Agony, pray'd with so much Fervour, and with so perfect a Submission to the Will of his Father, to call upon God with Perseverance when we are under Affliction, and at the same time, with an entire Resignation to his Will, saying, *Lord, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.* Let us likewise make a good Use of that Exhortation which *Jesus Christ* gave to his Apostles: *Watch and pray, lest you enter into Temptation; the Spirit truly is ready, but the Flesh is weak.* Christ assures us thereby, that the infallible Means not to fall into Sin, is to distrust our own Weakness, and to watch and pray; but that we are drawn away by Temptations, as soon as ever we neglect these Means. II. By the Narration of the Manner in which our Lord was taken, and by what He then said to *Judas*, and to the *Jews*, it appears plainly that He was not taken and condemn'd but through his own free Will, and by the Permission of Almighty God; this is another powerful Inducement for us to love our Saviour most fervently, who has been pleased to expose himself thus freely to Death for our sakes, and engage us to acquiesce and submit to the Will of the Lord in all Things. The Action of *St. Peter*, who wounded the Servant of the High Priest, being

being driven thereto by his Resentment and inconsiderate Zeal, is an Example for us, to abstain from Violence and Revenge, and to imitate in all Things that perfect Pattern of Meekness and Patience, our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

C H A P. XIV. 53,—72.

TH E Evangelist relates here, I. That which passed when our Saviour appeared before the Council of the *Jews*, and his Condemnation thereupon. And, II. the Fall of *St. Peter*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Reflexions that we are to make upon all that passed in the Council when our Lord was brought before it, relates, I. To the unjust and cruel Proceedings of the *Jews*. II. To the perfect Innocence of Christ, who could not be convicted of any Crime, notwithstanding all the Pains which his Enemies took to find out Accusations and false Witnesses against Him. III. That great Meekness, and that Spirit of Humility and Patience, which our Lord manifested by his Discourses, and by suffering all the Indignities they put upon Him. In all these Things He has left us very sensible Proofs of his Submission to the Will of his Father, and of his Love towards us, and a Pattern of Patience, to which we ought to conform our selves. IV. We have likewise seen how our Lord owned that He was the Son of God, though that Confession was to be the Cause of his Death; and it is thus that we are always obliged to confess the Truth, and to give Glory to God, even at the Peril of our Lives, when we are call'd thereto. V. It is next to be observed,

served, what Christ said to the *Jews* at the time of his Condemnation, *viz.* That they should soon see Tokens of his Power, by which it would be made appear what He was. This was fulfilled quickly after, when the *Jews* were destroy'd, and when they saw the Kingdom of our Lord establish'd in the World. VI. We ought also to improve, to our own Advantage, the Fall of St. *Peter*, who denied his Master after such a solemn Protestation that he would never forsake Him. Every Body, and even those Persons who abound with Zeal and good Intentions, may learn from hence, how great our Weakness is, and that we ought to be upon our guard against Temptation, by avoiding the Occasions of Sin; and the Repentance of this Apostle, which was so speedy and so bitter, teaches us, that when we stumble or make any fall, we ought to rise immediately, to have a lively sorrow for it, and to repair it by recourse to the Mercy of God, and by true Repentance.

CH A P. XV. 1,—15.

CH R I S T is brought before *Pilate*, who, after having endeavour'd to deliver Him, consents at last to his Death.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN that which passed before *Pilate*, there are Four chief Things to be observ'd. I. The Injustice and Rage of the *Jews*, which nothing could appease, and who so earnestly solicited the Condemnation of *Jesus*, even so far, as to prefer a Murderer before Him. II. The Humility, Silence, and Patience of our Lord, who submitted Himself to the Judgment of *Pilate*,
and

and underwent, without Complaining, all the unrighteous Treatment done to Him. These are strong Proofs of his Love for Men, whom He desir'd to save; and of his Submission to the Will of his Father; and it is likewise an Example of Resignation for such as are expos'd to Sufferings, or to the Iniquity of Men. III. It is to be observ'd, that the Innocence of Christ was fully acknowledg'd by *Pilate*, which aggravated the Guilt of the *Jews*, as well as that of the Governour. IV. And, *Lastly*, that that unjust Judge, after having refus'd to do what the *Jews* required, and after having endeavour'd to save the Life of Christ, did at length himself pronounce the Sentence of Death against Him. *Pilate* is an instance of those that sin against Light, who, after having resisted Temptation for a while, do yield to it, and who, for the fear of Men, and out of Views of Policy and Interest, or for some other Principle of the like Nature, do what their own Conscience condemns; whereas good Men do always adhere to their Duty, and pursue with steadiness the Dictates of their Heart, without turning aside for any consideration whatever.

C H A P. XV. 16,——47.

TH E History of the Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard the History of our Lord's Passion, in which we are chiefly to consider the Torments of that cruel Punishment He underwent, the Shame and Ignominy to which He was expos'd, by being

Crucified between two Thieves, the Outrages and Insults which the *Pharisees* and Priests offer'd to Him whilst He was fasten'd to the Cross; and, *Lastly*, the Death which put an end to his Sufferings. We discover in all this, the profound Humiliation of the Son of God, the great Love that He has shewn for us, and the Example of most perfect Patience. Wherefore we ought to look upon this Death as the Price of our Redemption, and the Support of our Faith; to love this good Saviour, who has so much loved us; to renounce Sin, which He came to destroy by his Death; and to learn from Him to bear our Cross, and to suffer patiently when we are called thereto. The History of Christ's Burial, and the Enquiries of *Pilate* before he would grant his Body to *Josepb*, prove that He really died, and consequently, that He really rose again. The Consideration of this Burial is likewise very proper to disperse the Fear that we may entertain of Death, and of the Grave, and to raise our Minds to the Expectation of a better Life.

CH A P. XVI.

IN this last Chapter of *St. Mark*, we see, I. The History of the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*. II. The Orders He gave his Apostles before He left the World. And, III. His Ascension.

Reflexi.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read, establishes, I. The Truth and Certainty of the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, since it was confirmed by the Apparition and Testimony of the Angels, and that our Lord was seen first by the Women that went to his Sepulchre, and afterwards by the Apostles at several Times. We ought to consider next, how glorious this Resurrection was, God having been pleased to send Angels to open the Tomb of our Lord, and to declare to Men that He was risen again. This wonderful Event proves therefore, that *Jesus* was the Son of God, and is an assurance to us, that He has perfectly reconciled us to God by the Sacrifice of Himself, and that He has overcome Death and the Grave. This Resurrection is likewise a certain earnest of our own, which ought to fill us with comfort and confidence, and powerfully excite us to Holiness. II. The Commands that Christ left with his Apostles, to go Preaching and Baptizing throughout the World, and the Power wherewith He armed them to work all sorts of Miracles, shew, that He spake as King of the Church, and Lord of all Things; and the Event agreeing with what He had said, does undeniably prove, that He is exalted to a supreme Power, and that the Gospel is a divine and heavenly Doctrine. We may observe particularly, that Christ speaks of Baptism after such a manner, as proves that this Ceremony is of Divine Institution; But that He declares at the same time, that Baptism will not save us, unless it be attended with a true Faith. III. And,

Lastly, The Ascension of Christ obliges us to consider Him as one, who has the Sovereign Authority over all Things, and who must be our Judge. And since He is likewise gone to Heaven, to prepare a Place for us there, we may aspire and endeavour, by Holiness and by good Works, to that glorious Mansion into which our Redeemer is enter'd, and where He is seated at the right Hand of God. May He Himself give us that Grace, and to Him be the Glory for ever. *Amen.*





St. *LUKE*.



CHAP. I. 1,—15.



THE Gospel of St. *Luke* was written about Twenty Years after the Ascension of *Jesus Christ*. The Author of this Gospel is St. *Luke*, who was the Disciple and Companion of St. *Paul*, and followed him in his Travels. This part of the first Chapter contains the Annunciation of the Birth of *John* the Baptist.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have here read, relates, I. To the Birth of *John* the Baptist. And, II. to his Ministry. As to his Birth, it may be observ'd, that there was something extraordinary and supernatural in it, since he proceeded from a Father advanced in Years, and from a Mother that was old and barren; that God declared this Birth by an Angel; and that *Zachariah* the Father, who could not believe it,

it, was assured of it by a Miracle, which God wrought in striking him Dumb. All which tended to shew, that *John* the Baptist was an extraordinary Person, and sent from God; and this Birth was likewise a Type and Prelude of that of *Jesus Christ*, which would be yet more miraculous, since He was to be born of a Virgin. As to the Ministry of *John* the Baptist, we ought seriously to consider what the Angel said to *Zachariah*, to reveal to him what his Son was to be one Day; namely, that he would be filled with the Holy Ghost, that he would be great before the Lord, and that, like another *Elias*, he would bring Men back to God, and to the Life of the Righteous, by the Severity of his own Life, by his Authority, by his great Zeal, and by the Strength of his Exhortations; and that by this Means he would prepare them to receive the Messiah, of whom he was to be the Forerunner. Let us gather from thence this important Lesson, that the Design of God in sending *John* the Baptist, and afterwards *Jesus Christ*, was for the Conversion of Mankind, for the withdrawing them from their Sins, and for making them a holy People, and given to good Works.

C H A P. I. 26, — 56.

WHAT we are about to read, contains, I. The Annunciation of the Angel *Gabriel* to the blessed Virgin. II. The Visit she made to *Elizabeth*. III. Her Song of Praise.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N that which the Angel said to the Virgin *Mary*, when he acquainted her that she was to be the Mother of *Jesus Christ*, we may

may chiefly remark these two Things: One, that the Body of our Lord was to be formed of the Substance of the Virgin by the Operation of the Holy Ghost; and the other, that this *Jesus*, who was to be born of *Mary*, would be the Son of God, that He would be exalted to very great Glory, and that He would reign eternally. From whence we may collect, that the Birth of Christ was miraculous, and altogether holy; that He did really assume our Nature, and become Man; but likewise that He was perfectly holy, and separated from Sinners, which proves, that He is the Son of God and the promised Messiah. II. We find in the next Place, that tho' the blessed Virgin would at first scarce believe what the Angel told her, yet she did not doubt but what had been declared to her from God, would certainly come to pass; and that she was confirmed in it by the Visit that she made her Cousin *Elizabeth*, the Mother of *John* the Baptist, who had likewise miraculously conceiv'd; upon which Occasion, III. she returned Praises to God by the Song related in this Chapter. All this shews the Faith, the Piety, and Humility of the Virgin *Mary*. We may observe particularly in her Song, how she was transported with Joy, from the Sense of the Favour that God had done her to be the Mother of the Messiah. We discover therein a profound Humility, a lively Gratitude, and at the same time a firm Belief that God was about to deliver his People, and to fulfil the Promises He had made them of sending the Redeemer. When we read this Relation, we ought to celebrate the Happiness of the Virgin as she her self has describ'd it; to imitate her Piety, her Humility, her Faith, and her other Virtues; we should abase ourselves before God as she did, under the Sense of his

his Mercies, and of our own Unworthiness, and, with her also, praise Him above all things, for having sent into the World Christ our Saviour, according to the Promises He had formerly made.

CH A P. I. 57,—80.

WH A T we are now about to read contains, I. The History of *John* the Baptist. And, II. The Song of his Father *Zachariah*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E S E are the Reflexions which we ought to make, I. Upon the Birth of *John* the Baptist. And, II. Of the Song of *Zachariah*: We have seen how this Birth was attended with several very remarkable Circumstances, namely, that *Zachariah* did then recover his Speech by a Miracle; that the Rumour of his Son's Birth was spread every where; and that all People impatiently expected what that Child would be one Day. All these Events were the Dispensations of Providence, that the *Jews* might be prepared to look upon *John* the Baptist as one sent from God, to receive his Preaching, and to believe the Witness which he was to bear concerning *Jesus Christ*. In the Song which *Zachariah* did then pronounce, by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we may observe these three Things: *First*, His Joy, his Gratitude, and the Thanks he returned to God for his being about to deliver his People. *Secondly*, His Faith, since he was convinced that the Messiah was about to appear, and that the Son which was born to Him, would be the Forerunner. *Thirdly*, *Zachariah* shews

shews in this Chapter the Design of Christ's Coming, when he says, *That we being delivered from the Hands of our Enemies, might serve God without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness, all the Days of our Life.* This should stir us up to bless God with *Zachariah*, for having saved us by *Jesus Christ*, and to extol his Mercy, as well as his Faithfulness and the Truth of his Promises. And since our Lord is come to consecrate us to the Service of God, 'tis our Duty to answer the Design of his Coming, by serving God faithfully, and by living in Holiness and Righteousness the whole Time of our Lives. God grant us Grace so to do.

C H A P. II. 1—20.

WE have here the History of the Birth of *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first Reflexion we are to make upon the History of our Saviour's Birth is, that the Messiah being to be born at *Bethlehem*, according to the Prophecies, Providence guided the blessed Virgin from *Galilee*, where she dwelt, to that City, by means of the Decree of the Emperor *Augustus*, who had order'd an Account to be taken of the Number of all his Subjects, and that therefore every one should resort to the Place of his Birth. II. That our Lord was born in very mean and poor Circumstances, God being pleas'd as it were to declare thereby before hand, that Christ was not to live in Pomp and Glory, and that his Kingdom would not be of this World. III. That this Birth, which was so obscure and lowly, was render'd illustrious by the Apparition of the Angels, who

who denounced it to the Shepherds, and by the Song of those blessed Spirits. It pleased God moreover, that the Shepherds should go to *Bethlehem* to see the Child *Jesus*, and to inform the holy Virgin of all the Wonders they had seen and heard, and then that they should publish them all abroad, to the end, that the Expectation of the *Jews* might be excited and prepared for the Reception of *Jesus Christ*. All these Events ought to strengthen our Faith, and fill us with Joy and Comfort; we ought especially to join our Praises to those of the Shepherds and holy Angels, and bless God with them, that a Saviour is born unto us; and by this Birth, Peace has been given to the Earth, and the good Will of God so clearly manifested towards Men.

C H A P. II. 21,—52.

ST. *Luke* relates, I. The Circumcision of Christ, the Presenting Him to the Temple, and the Thanksgivings thereupon by *Simeon*, and *Anna* the Prophetess. II. He recites, in the next Place, how Christ, being Twelve Years old, was found in the Temple in the midst of the Doctors.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may consider, I. in relation to what is here said about the Circumcision of Christ, his Presentation to the Temple, the Purification of the Virgin, and the Offering which she made according to Custom, that God thought fit that all these Things should be observed, even after the Birth of our Lord, because they were prescribed by the Law. II. The Joy which *Simeon*, and *Anna* the Prophetess,

tests, shewed at that time, and the Praises which they publickly gave to God, are an Argument, that the Birth of Christ is the most happy and the most salutary Event that ever came to pass, and that therefore we ought to have very joyful Sentiments thereof, and incessantly to bless the Lord for them. We ought to do it the rather, because what *Simeon* said in his Song, has been accomplished in us, and because we are some of those *Gentiles*, to whom the Messiah was to be the Light and the Glory. III. What *Simeon* said to the blessed Virgin, of the Glory of her Son, as well as of the Contradictions and Sufferings to which He should be exposed, tended to convince her, that the Kingdom of Christ would not be a Temporal Kingdom, and to prepare her to see Him rejected by the *Jews*, and put to Death. As for us, we ought to learn from thence, that our Saviour was to be receiv'd by some, and rejected by others; and that if his Coming be wholesome to such as receive Him with Faith, it is an occasion of Scandal and Destruction to Unbelievers. IV. That which happen'd to Christ at the Age of Twelve Years, when He was found in the Temple in the midst of the Doctors, shews, that there appear'd in Him, even from his earliest Youth, extraordinary Understanding, Wisdom, and Zeal, and that He was to be one day endow'd with the Spirit of God in a rich and abundant Measure. God was pleased thereby to begin to make Him known to the *Jews*, and to dispose them to profit by his Ministry when He should exercise it among them.

C H A P. III.

THIS Chapter contains Three Things.
 I. The Preaching of *John* the Baptist.
 II. The Baptism of *Jesus Christ*. And, III.
 his Genealogy.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Luke* informs us here, I. That before the Appearance of our Lord, *John* the Baptist was sent, as had been foretold by the Prophets, to prepare the *Jews* for his Reception: This he did, by Preaching Repentance, and by exhorting the People to believe on Him who was to come soon after; by Baptizing those that receiv'd his Doctrine, and by threatening the unbelieving and impenitent *Jews*, that altho' they were the Children of *Abraham*, they should not escape the Wrath to come, and that God would raise up other Children to *Abraham*, even from the Stones; which denoted that the *Gentiles* should be called in their stead. All this tended to make the *Jews* understand, that the Kingdom of the Messiah was about to be manifested; but that it was to be a Spiritual, and not a Temporal Kingdom, as they expected; and that no Body would have any Share in the Advantages of that Kingdom, but such as should give themselves up to Holiness, and to Virtue. These Instructions concern us as well as the *Jews*; they shew, that without Amendment of Life we cannot be the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*; that an outward Appearance of Zeal, and an external Engagement in the Divine Covenant, signifies nothing; but that we must shew in reality, and by our Works, the Sincerity of our Faith and Repentance;

tance; and that harden'd and obstinate Sinners shall no more escape divine Vengeance than the Hypocrites. Besides this, the several Counsels that *John* Baptist gave the People, the Publicans and the Soldiers, shew us, that every one ought faithfully to discharge the Duties of his Calling, and to avoid those Sins in which it may engage us; particularly, that we ought to exercise Charity, and to renounce Covetousness, Injustice, Violence, and Fraud. II. What we are to consider about the Baptism of *Jesus Christ* is, that God thought fit He should be baptized by *John*, and that upon this Occasion the Holy Ghost came down upon Him, and a Voice was heard from Heaven, to the end that *John* the Baptist himself, the *Jews*, and all the People, might consider our Lord as the Son of God, and as Him whom they ought to obey. III. As for what relates to the Genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, as it is here related by St. *Luke*, we must observe, that it differs from that of St. *Matthew*, because the latter gives us the Genealogy of *Joseph*, the Husband of the holy Virgin, by *Solomon*, the Son of King *David*; whereas the former deduces the Virgin's Pedigree by *Nathan*, who was likewise a Son of *David*; but both of them agree in making our Lord to be descended from King *David* and the Patriarch *Abraham*, which was one of the Characters of the Messiah.

C H A P. IV. 1,—15.

TH E Evangelist gives us here, I. The History of our Saviour's Temptation. And, II. how he began the Exercise of his Ministry in *Galilee*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**O understand aright the History of the Temptation, which is the chief Thing to be consider'd here, we must know, that when it is said, the Devil tempted *Jesus*, it ought to be understood thus: That he had a Mind to try whether *Jesus* was the Son of God; and that God permitted Him to be thus tempted, before He began to preach the Gospel, and to work Miracles, to the end, that the Devil being convinc'd that *Jesus* was really the Son of God, he might revere his Power, and obey his Commands, when afterwards He should drive out Devils from such as were possess'd by them. The End therefore of this Temptation or Trial was, to shew that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, and that He came into the World to destroy the Kingdom of the Devil. To this general Consideration, we may add two particular ones: The first is, That, according to the Example of Christ, we should resist all Temptations, and especially such as lead us to Distrust, or to Presumption, or to the Love of Glory, and the good Things of this World; or, *Lastly*, to tempt God by a rash Confidence. II. The second Consideration relates to the Means of resisting Temptations. The Retreat of *Jesus Christ* into the Wilderness, his Fasting, and the Manner in which He repelled the Assaults of the Devil by the holy Scripture, teaches us, that Retirement, Fasting, Prayer, and the Word of God, are the most efficacious Methods to overcome Temptation, and to defeat the Attempts of the Enemies of our Salvation.

C H A P. IV. 16,——44.

I. **O** U R Lord being at *Nazareth*, on a Sabbath-Day, in the Synagogue, read a Prophecy of *Isaiah*, which denoted that God would send the Messiah, and that He would fill Him with his Spirit, to declare to Men the joyful Tidings of Salvation; and He shewed that that Prophecy was fulfilled in his Person. Then He reproached the Inhabitants of that City with their Unbelief, which did so exasperate them, that they would have thrown Him down headlong from a Precipice, but He escap'd their Fury. II. He went from thence to *Capernaum*, where He healed a Man possess'd by the Devil, as also the Mother in Law of St. *Peter*, and several other diseased Persons; and went through *Galilee*, working Miracles, and preaching the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T** H E first Reflexion that this Reading offers to our Minds is, that Christ having been filled with the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and having declared to Men the blessed Tidings of Salvation, the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, which is related in this Chapter, was fulfilled in Him. As for the Discourse which our Lord made in the Synagogue of *Nazareth*, this is the Meaning and Design thereof: *Jesus* was desirous to make the Inhabitants of that City, among whom He had been brought up, sensible that their Infidelity was the Cause that He did not work the same Miracles among them as He had elsewhere; in the same manner as formerly *Elijah* and *Elisha* had wrought Miracles in favour of Strangers, preferably to those of their own

Nation. The Use we ought to make of this is, that God deprives those of his Grace and wholesome Presence, who render themselves unworthy of it, and who having the Preaching of the Gospel in the midst of them, do not make any Advantage of it. In the Resolution which the Inhabitants of *Nazareth* took, to throw down Christ from a Precipice, we see the Proofs of that Infidelity whereof He reproached them, and of their Ingratitude; but it may be likewise observed, that they could not execute their Design, Christ having escaped their Fury, his Hour being not yet come. II. The several Miracles that are related about the End of this Chapter, and by which our Lord began to make Himself known in *Galilee*, and the Care He took to pass through the Towns of that Country, declaring the Gospel, are so many Proofs of his great Zeal, of his unlimited Power, of the Charity wherewith He was animated towards Mankind, and of the Divinity of his Doctrine.

CHAP. V. 1,—16.

WE have here, I. The Relation of a wonderful Fishing, which Christ caused *St. Peter* to make. II. The Healing of a Leper, and of divers other diseased Persons.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ought to observe and admire the Power of Christ, as well as the Wisdom, in the wonderful Fishing, of which we have read the History. He wrought this Miracle, to confirm *St. Peter* and some of his Companions in the Vocation to the Office of an Apostle, and to assure them, that their Ministry would

would produce great Fruits. And this Miracle ought to make so much the greater Impression on them, as our Lord did it in a Matter that related to their own Business, as they were Fishers, whereby they were made the more sensible of the greatness thereof; and it did accordingly produce such an effect in the Mind of *St. Peter*, who was seiz'd with Admiration, Respect, and Fear, at the Sight of what had happen'd; and who, as well as his Companions, *St. James* and *St. John*, forsook every thing forthwith to follow our Lord. II. In the Cure of the Leper, there are these Two Things to be observ'd, *viz.* That it was by his Faith and Prayers that he was made Whole; and that our Lord sent him to the Priest, and commanded him to offer that which was order'd by the Law of *Moses* in the like Case. He did this, the better to prove the Certainty of the Miracle He had wrought, to convince the Priests themselves thereof, and to shew, that He observed all that God had commanded in the Law. Finally, This Miracle, as well as the other wonderful Cures which Christ performed with so much Goodness upon those that desired it, should convince us, that He is an all-powerful and charitable Saviour, and that He is not less inclin'd to grant us a Cure for our Souls, a Deliverance from our Sins, and those Graces that are necessary for Salvation, than He was formerly to heal the Sick, who implored his Assistance.

C H A P. V. 17, — 39.

I. **C**H R I S T heals a Paraltical Man, and calls *Levi*, which was the Apostle *St. Matthew*. II. He answers those who found fault with his eating with Sinners. And, III.

gives a Reason why his Disciples did not Fast, as well as those of *John* the Baptist.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E R E are two Things in the Case of the Paralitical Person, which we ought chiefly to take notice of; one is, the Faith of those that presented him to the Lord; and the other, his Answer to the *Pharisees*, when they accused Him of speaking Blasphemy, because He attributed to himself the Power of Pardon-
ing Sin. This teaches us, that Faith is of a very great Efficacy to obtain the Favour of God, and that Christ has a Power and an Authority without Bounds, since He can pardon the Sins of Men. II. That which is to be observed in the Relation St. *Luke* gives, in the Calling of St. *Matthew*, is, that our Lord chose to himself Disciples and Apostles among the Persons that were not only not of a distinguished Rank in the World, but such as were even look'd upon with Contempt by the *Jews*, as were the Publicans, and that the *Pharisees* were scandaliz'd at his keeping Company with such People; whereupon He told them, that He *came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*; thereby teaching us, that the End of his Coming was to save Sinners; but however, that Sinners can only be saved by Repentance; this likewise shews us, that we ought to be very glad when God brings back Sinners from their Wandrings, and that even we our selves ought likewise to endeavour to bring them into the right Way. III. We have seen in the third Place, that our Lord did not oblige his Disciples to Fast, and to live in such a retir'd and rigid Manner as the Disciples of *John* the Baptist, and those of the *Pharisees*. He did so, be-
cause

cause his Ministry engag'd Him to go into different Parts, and to converse with all kind of People; but He declares however, that his Disciples would be called, after that He had left them, not only to Fasting, but to great Sufferings; and that if He did not call them thereto at that Time, it was to spare their Weakness; which is illustrated by the Comparison of an old Cloth, and old Bottles. From hence we may gather, that Christ was so far from condemning Fasts and a mortified Life, and from suffering his Disciples to hunt after Pleasures, and gratifie their Senses, that, on the contrary, He calls them to live in Sobriety and Mortification, and to bear their Crosses.

C H A P. VI. 1,—19.

I. **O** U R Lord justifies his Disciples from the Blame laid upon them, for plucking and eating the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day. II. He cures a Man that had a wither'd Hand. And, III. He appoints the Twelve Apostles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T** H E Reflexions we are to make upon that which our Lord said to the *Pharisees*, who were scandaliz'd, because his Disciples had pluck'd the Ears of Corn on a Sabbath-Day. And, II. because He himself had healed a Man with a wither'd Hand on the like Day, is, that Hypocrites, and those who have a false Zeal, are offended at that which is innocent and lawful, and sometimes, even with Actions that are necessary and commendable; that they easily condemn others, and scruple at Things of small Moment, while they themselves

are wanting in the most essential Duties of Piety and Charity. We ought therefore to learn from hence, to avoid Hypocrisie, Superstition, and rash Judgments, and always to cleave to the most weighty Matters in Religion, and to a solid Piety, enlighten'd and attended with Charity. III. We see next, that our Lord chose Twelve Apostles, to whom He gave Commission to preach the Gospel, and to work Miracles. And since their Names have been preserved, and that they were the first and principal Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, we ought to bless their Memory, and to praise God for the great Things He has done by their Means; to imitate their Zeal, and their Virtues; to receive the Doctrine they have taught, as well by word of Mouth, as by Writings; and *Lastly*, to practise the holy Commands which they have left us, as the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, to whom Obedience, Praise, and Glory, is to be render'd from Age to Age.

C H A P. VI. 20,—49.

THIS is a Discourse of our Lord, in which He speaks, I. Of those Things that make the Happiness or Unhappiness of Men. II. Of Charity, and of the Love that we ought to bear to our Enemies. III. Of rash Judgments, and of some other Duties. And, IV. He concludes this Discourse in shewing by a Parable, that it is of no use to hear the Word, if we don't do that which is commanded by it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Discourse that contains several useful Instructions. I. The first is, that who are poor, afflicted, despised, and persecuted,

ted, and who at the same time are meek, patient, and godly, are the true Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, and will be happy in this World and the next; and that, on the contrary, those who are thought the most Happy, because they live in Plenty and in Pleasures, and because they are loved and esteemed by the World, are the most miserable of all Men. II. The second Instruction is, that we ought to love every Body, even those that do not love us; to return them Good for Evil, to suffer some Loss, rather than revenge our selves, or engage in Quarrels and Law-suits; that if we only love those who love us, we are no better than Heathens; but that we ought to be merciful, and to do good to all, imitating therein our Heavenly Father, who is kind both to the Wicked and Ungrateful. III. Our Lord has forbid us to pass rash Judgments, and declar'd, that it is a very great Piece of Hypocrisie, to examine and censure other Mens Faults without amending our own, which are oftentimes greater than those of our Neighbours. IV. The fourth Instruction is compris'd in these Expressions; namely, that *The Tree is known by its Fruit*; and that *From the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. That is to say, that Men shew by their Behaviour and Discourses what they are; and that the Way to order our Actions and Words aright, is to purifie our Hearts. Lastly, Christ tells us in the most positive manner, that He does not acknowledge for his Disciples those that call Him Lord, but do not obey his Commands; and shews, by the Comparison of one House built on a Rock, and another upon the Sand, that nothing can shake those, who, to the Knowledge of the Gospel, join the Practice of its Duties; whereas those that content themselves with hearing his Word, without doing that

that which is order'd therein, cannot resist Temptations, nor attain Salvation. Let us incessantly set before our Eyes these Divine Rules of Morality prescribed by *Jesus Christ*; let us make them subservient to our advancing in Piety; and let us beseech Him, that He himself will enable us to do it by his Grace.

C H A P. VII. 1, — 17.

ST. *Luke* relates two Miracles. I. The Cure of a Servant belonging to a *Gentile* Captain. And, II. the raising from the Dead the Son of a Widow Woman of the City of *Nain*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N the miraculous Cure wrought upon the Servant of the Centurion, we may chiefly remark the Humility of that Man, who, being a *Gentile* by Birth, thought himself not worthy that Christ should come into his House; as also the greatness of his Faith, which appears in his Belief that our Lord, without coming to see his Servant, could heal him by one Word only, as easily, and as soon, as he, who was a Captain, could make himself be obeyed by his Soldiers. The Praises that our Lord gave that Man, in saying, that He had not found such Faith among the *Jews*, and the Miracle He wrought in his favour, shews very plainly, that nothing is more acceptable to Him than Faith and Humility; and that a lively Faith, and a profound Sense of our own Unworthiness, are the Means to obtain of Him the Effects of his Mercy. II. The other Miracle that our Lord wrought, in raising the Son of the Widow of *Nain*,

Nain, is an event whereby the Power of *Jesus Christ* is shewn in a manner yet more illustrious; his Goodness, and the Compassion He had for afflicted Persons, do likewise appear there very plainly. Wherefore we have very powerful Motives for Trust and Reliance on Him in this History, which ought to fill us with Comfort; and we should particularly consider, that our Lord having not only healed the Diseased, but also restored Life to the Dead, upon several Occasions, is able to restore it to us too after Death, and that He will certainly do it at the last Day, according to his Promises.

C H A P. VII. 18,—35.

I. **J** O H N the Baptist sends two of his Disciples to ask *Jesus*, whether He was the Messiah; who thereupon works Miracles in their Presence. II. He speaks of the Ministry of *John* the Baptist, representing the Excellency and Nature thereof. III. He complains of the Hardness of the *Jews*, who had not benefitted neither by his Ministry, nor by that of *John* the Baptist.

Reflexions after the Reading.

T H I S Reading presents us with the following Reflexions: I. That our Saviour being ask'd, whether He were the Messiah, avoid- ed owning that He was so; because He would not declare it openly, but contented Himself with working Miracles in the Presence of *John's* Disciples; which proved more plainly, that He was the Messiah, than if He had said it himself. II. The second Reflexion relates to the Manner after which Christ made mention of *John* the Baptist and of his Ministry, by telling the *Jews*,
that

that when they went into the Defart to hear him, they did not see a Reed shaken with the Wind; that is to say, a Man, whose Person and Discourse deserved none of their Attention; neither did they see there a Man clothed with soft Raiment, or appearing with Pomp, like those that dwell in Kings Palaces; but that they had there seen a Prophet, and even the greatest of Prophets, since it was he who was to be sent before the Coming of the Messiah. Christ intended to shew thereby, that People were not to be surpris'd if He himself appear'd in a very plain Manner, and a lowly Condition; and that his Kingdom was not to be attended with worldly Pomp, as were those of the Kings of the Earth. III. Christ says, that as great as *John* the Baptist was, the least Person in the Kingdom of God, that is, in the Church, was greater than he; because the Meanest among the Faithful do better understand the Messiah, and the Reasons of his Coming, than *John* the Baptist himself. These Words, which inform us of the Glory and of the Advantages of our Condition, should stir us up to act conformably thereto, and to render our selves worthy thereof. IV. The last Reflexion is, that those Persons, who were the most Contemptible, and the most Hated among the *Jews*, were affected at the Preaching of *John* the Baptist and our Saviour; but that the *Pharisees*, and those who passed for the Wisest among them, had rejected those Exhortations, saying, that the Life of *John* the Baptist was too strict, and that of Christ too loose, because He often kept Company with Sinners. This Instance proves, that nothing can satisfy nor affect People that are prejudiced and corrupted; that they abuse all the Means which
God

God employs for their Conversion; whilst those whose Heart is right, do zealously lay hold on the same.

C H A P. VII. 36,—50.

THIS is the History of the Sinner, who washed the Feet of Christ with her Tears, and whose Sins were pardoned by Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a very remarkable History; we are hereby instructed in the Nature of true Repentance, and of its Efficacy. I. We find in the Sinner there mentioned, a Pattern of that profound Humility wherewith great Sinners ought to deplore their Wanderings; and of that lively Sorrow that penetrates the Soul, and which appears outwardly by Tears, and by all the Tokens of a sincere Compunction, and of a wholesome Confusion; and which, Lastly, produces an entire Renunciation of Sin. II. We see here with how much Goodness the Saviour of the World receives true Penitents, and pardons their Faults. What He says to the *Pharisee*, who believed that *Jesus* was not a Prophet, because He permitted that same Sinner to approach Him, and to kiss his Feet, tended to convince him, that He knew very well what this Woman was, but that He did not reject great Sinners when they were truly Penitent, and that we also should neither reject nor despise them; we must likewise take a particular Notice of these Words of our Lord: *He to whom much is forgiven will love more.* By which He shews plainly, that those to whom God pardons great Sins, ought to love Him

Him with greater Fervency, and more carefully avoid Relapsing into their former Disorders; and that they may even become very acceptable to God, and attain to a considerable Degree of Holiness. This is a Doctrine very proper for the Consolation of Sinners, and which ought to animate them to the Love of God, and to the Practice of Piety and good Works.

C H A P. VIII. 1,—21.

THIS Part of the eighth Chapter of St. *Luke*, includes Two Things. I. The Parable of the Seed. And, II. the Declaration our Lord makes, that his true Disciples were as dear to Him as his own Kindred.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Design of *Jesus Christ* in the Parable of the Seed, was to teach those that heard Him, that all Men did not receive the Word of God after the same manner. The Seed that falls on the Way side, represents People that are entirely harden'd, and such as this Word does not at all affect. By the Seed that fell among Stones, our Lord describes the Condition of those, on whom the Word makes some Impression, who relish it at first, and receive it gladly, but without persevering, and yield to Temptation. The Seed that falls among Thorns, sets before our Eyes the Condition of those Hearers in whom the Gospel does not produce its effect, their Heart being taken up with the Love of Riches, and filled with the Cares of this Life. But by the Seed that is sown in good Ground, and that brings forth a great deal of Fruit, Christ denotes those

those that receive the Word with an honest and good Heart, and upon whom it has its effect. Let us listen seriously to this Parable ; let us take Care, as our Lord exhorts us here, after what manner we receive the Word of God, and carefully examine our selves, to see whether we make a good Use thereof. II. This is what we are further oblig'd to by the Declaration which our Lord made, when He was told, that his Mother and his near Relations desired to speak with Him. We may learn from thence, that what chiefly procures us a Share in his Love, is a great Attention, and a great Zeal to hear his Word, and to do his Will ; and that therefore it is what we should principally apply our selves to. It likewise teaches us, that the Bands of Holiness are yet stronger than those of Nature, and that among all those upon whom we ought to bestow the most of our Affection and Esteem, they should have the Preference, who truly love our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who serve Him with a pure Heart, and keep his Commandments.

C H A P. VIII. 22,—39.

I. **C**H R I S T lays a Tempest. II. He heals a Demoniack in the Country of the *Gadarenes*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Account of that which befel the Disciples, when they were exposed to a Storm, engages us to take a particular Notice of the Weakness of their Faith, and at the same time, of the great Goodness of our Lord, and of the Power He shewed in Calming the Tempest ; upon which we must consider, that those

those whom God loves, may meet with great Dangers, and that in such a Condition, they may be overcome with Fears, but that God will never forsake them; and that when we have reason to believe that He favours us with his Love, and with his Protection, we are then in Safety. II. As for the History of the Man possess'd with a Devil, this is what may be observed thereupon: *viz.* That our Lord had an absolute Power over the Devils; that those wicked Spirits feared and dreaded Him as their Judge; and that these miraculous Deliverances shewed, that He was to destroy the Kingdom of the Devil. It must be moreover observed, that if our Lord permitted the Devils to enter into the Swine, and to make them run headlong into the Sea, it was to shew, that these evil Spirits could do nothing but by his Permission, and that the Man whom He had cured was really possess'd by the Devil. He did it likewise to try the *Gadarenes*, and to see whether they would be more sensible of that Loss, than of the Advantage of enjoying his Presence. *Lastly*, We should consider, that tho' Mankind are not so much exposed to the Power of the Devils as they were in our Saviour's time, when He deliver'd such as were possess'd, they may fall however after another Manner into the Power of this Enemy of our Salvation. 'Tis what happens to those, of whom the Scripture says, *Eph. ii. 2.* *2 Tim. ii. 26.* *Matt. xxv. 41.* that the Devil works upon them powerfully; and who, if they don't break loose from those Snares in which they have been taken to do his Will, shall be cast into everlasting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

C H A P. VIII. 40,—56.

O U R Lord does here two Miracles. I. He cures a Woman diseased with loss of Blood. II. And raises to Life the Daughter of *Jairus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

T H E two Miracles mention'd in this Part of the eighth Chapter, engage us to make the following Reflexions: I. The first relates to the Opinion and Behaviour of that Woman, who not daring to present her self before the Lord, to beg Him to heal her, was contented to touch his Garment; this shews the profound Humility of this Woman, and at the same time the greatness of her Faith, and the high Thoughts she had of the Power of Christ. Her speedy and miraculous Cure does not only display the Divine Virtue that was in our Saviour, but does likewise convince us, that with Humility and Faith we shall obtain of Him every thing necessary to Salvation. II. The Resurrection of the Daughter of *Jairus*, is a Miracle still more considerable, and more worthy of Notice than the foregoing, since this Miracle does not suffer us to doubt whether Christ could raise the Dead, nor that He shall one Day do the same for our sakes also. This therefore ought to confirm us in the Belief of the Promises which He has made us of a better Life, raise us to a steady Expectation of Immortality, and stir us up more and more to Holiness of Life, and to the Exercise of good Works.

C H A P. IX. 1,—17.

ST. *Luke* relates three Things. I. The Mission of the Twelve Apostles throughout *Judea*, and the Instructions which our Lord gave them. II. The Opinion that King *Herod* had of Christ. III. The miraculous Multiplication of five Loaves and two Fishes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we are to consider upon the sending the Apostles is, that Christ order'd them to go before Him into *Judea*, in order to spread every where the glad Tidings of the Arrival of the Messiah, and to prepare the *Jews*, by their Preaching, and by their Miracles, for his Reception. He forbid them to make any Provision or Preparation for that Journey, because they were not to go far, nor to be long absent from Him. He was likewise willing thereby to prepare them for the future Preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole Earth, and for relying upon Providence; but that which we are chiefly to observe in Christ's Speech to them is, that the Ministry of the Servants of God is only profitable to those that receive them; and that those who reject them, draw upon themselves a severe, but just Condemnation. II. We see in the second Place, that they had a high Opinion of our Lord among the *Jews*, since they took Him for *Elias*, or some other of the Prophets; but it is a Thing worth notice, that *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, by whom the Resurrection is denied, should imagine, that *John* the Baptist, whom he had put to Death, was risen again. We must consider it as an effect of the Remorses which stung that wicked

wicked Prince's Conscience, for having put to Death this holy Man. But the Wicked are always fearful, and the Terrors even of their Conscience make them sometimes believe things which they had rejected and denied before. III. The Miracle of the Five Loaves is attended with two particular Circumstances, one, that our Lord did it in the Presence of above Five Thousand Persons, and for their sakes: The other, that the Apostles having filled twelve Baskets with the Fragments that remained, they became a fresh Proof of the Truth of this Miracle. Thus it serves so much the better to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, and his Divine Mission.

C H A P. IX. 18,—45.

I. **O** U R Lord asks his Disciples their Opinions concerning Him; to which St. Peter answers, that they look'd upon Him to be the Son of God. He warns them of his Death, and exhorts them to prepare themselves for Sufferings, and to make an open Profession of the Gospel. II. He is afterwards transfigured in the Presence of three of them. III. He heals a Lunatick, who could not be cured by his Apostles. IV. He tells them that He should be condemn'd to Death, which they could not comprehend, because they did not believe that the Messiah was to die.

Reflexions after the Reading.

T H I S is what we may gather from the first Part of this Chapter: I. That we ought all to believe with our Hearts, and confess with our Mouths, as St. Peter did formerly, that *Jesus* is the Christ, the Son of the

Living God. II. That *Jesus Christ* came into the World to suffer, and to die. III. That what He requires of those who would be his Disciples, is to deny themselves, to take up their Cross, and always to make a publick and sincere Profession of their Faith. IV. That there is nothing of greater Importance to us than the Salvation of our Soul, and that it would be of no Advantage to us to gain the whole World at the Expence of our Souls. That which ought to be chiefly consider'd in the Transfiguration of our Lord is, that the Glory with which the Apostles saw Him then surrounded, and the Voice that came from Heaven, demonstrate the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel; as St. *Peter* himself, who was present at that Transfiguration, takes notice in the first Chapter of his second Epistle. The Presence of *Moses* and *Elias*, that was seen with *Jesus*, and who discours'd Him about what He was to suffer at *Jerusalem*, shews, that this was He whose Coming had been foretold by the Prophets, but that He is more Excellent than they; it likewise proves, that those holy Men did exist after their Death, and that there is another Life for the Righteous. V. We see in the Cure of the Lunatick, that the Faith of the Apostles was still very Weak, as our Lord reproaches them; and that it was by reason of the smallness of their Faith, that they could not cure this Mad-man; but that that Faith was fortified afterwards in Proportion, as they were better instructed, and as their Prejudices wore away. Faith is not less necessary for Sanctification, and for Salvation, than it was formerly for working Miracles. Our Stumblings, and our Failings, proceed only from the Want of Faith; for which Reason, we ought to labour to

to be confirmed therein, and to beseech the Lord, that it may be more and more increased in us.

CHAP. IX. 46,——62.

I. **C**H R I S T teaches his Disciples Humility, who, from the Opinion that their Master would reign upon Earth, disputed among themselves who should be the greatest in his Kingdom. II. He blames St. *John* for having hinder'd a Man that did not follow Him, from casting out Devils in his Name. III. He censures two of the Apostles, who would have called for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*, that refused to entertain Him. IV. He returns an Answer to three Persons that would have followed Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **L**E T us remember these Lessons of Humility which our Lord gave his Disciples; let us learn from thence, that haughty Thoughts, and the Love of worldly Glory, are unworthy of Christians; and that if we would enter into the Kingdom of God, we must become Children in Meekness and Humility, and shew our Esteem for all those that believe in Christ, and that love Him, even tho' they be mean and contemptible in the World. II. The Answer that our Lord gave St. *John*, who would have hinder'd a Man from casting out Devils in Christ's Name, because that Person did not keep Company with the Apostles, teaches us, that we must never oppose, upon any Pretence, those who labour sincerely to advance the Kingdom of our Lord. III. There are weighty Considerations to be made upon the Reproof

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which Christ gave *James* and *John*, who, being transported with an indiscreet Zeal, and with that Aversion which the *Jews* bore to the *Samaritans*, were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon those of them that had refused to lodge their Master. This is a Warning to us, never to suffer our selves to be overcome by a false and blind Zeal, or by a Spirit of Revenge; but to be always endued, as Christ himself was, with the Spirit of Patience, Meekness, and Forbearance towards all the World, and particularly towards such as are in Error, and that entertain Sentiments of Religion different from our own. IV. By the Answers which Christ gave the three Persons that would have follow'd Him, He would have them to understand, *first*, That He did not promise the Conveniencies of this Life to his Disciples. *Secondly*, That they must be prepared to forsake all Things for the Love of Him, even such as are innocent and lawful, when they are a Hindrance to the Discharge of our Duties. And *Thirdly*, When Men are once engaged in his Service, they are bound to follow that Call, and not to look back to the World.

C H A P. X. 1, — 24.

I. **C**H R I S T chuses seventy Disciples, sends them before Him, gives them the Power of working Miracles, and the necessary Instructions for their Business; and denounces the Judgments of God against those Cities which had not repented upon his Preaching, and doing Miracles in them. II. The seventy Disciples render an Account to Christ of the Success of their Journey and Ministry, upon which Occasion, He foretels the Destruction of

of the Kingdom of Satan. III. He praises God, that the Gospel was preached and received by Persons that were of no Rank nor Distinction in the World; and He represents to his Disciples how happy they were in being instructed by Him in the great Truths of the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may observe, that Christ sent seventy Disciples into *Judea*, to the end, that the happy Tidings of the Coming of the Kingdom of God might be spread with the greater Dispatch, and that they might be the better able to go and preach the same Doctrine throughout all the Earth afterwards. The Instructions which He gave them shew, that the Servants of God ought to exercise their Office with fidelity, disinterestedness, and courage; that those whose Heart is right, and who are of a peaceful Mind, will receive them, but that those who refuse to hear them are inexcusable. II. The Threatnings which Christ denounces against the Cities of *Galilee*, where He had preached and done Miracles, are a Warning to us, that those to whom our Saviour has caused the Gospel to be preached, and that do not grow better by it, must expect the severest Punishment. III. Upon what Christ said to the seventy Disciples, when they gave Him an Account of the Success of their Journey, and of the Miracles which they had wrought, we may observe, that He foretold the speedy Ruine of the Kingdom of Satan, which effectually happen'd soon after by the Preaching of the Gospel. He likewise declared to them, that tho' it was a very glorious Privilege, to be able to cast out Devils, they ought rather to rejoice that

that their Names were written in Heaven ; that is to say, that they were the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, and that the Joys and Glories of Heaven were reserved for them. The Advantage of belonging to God, and to be of the Number of the truly Faithful, is infinitely more considerable than the Power of working Miracles. IV. Let us also carefully listen to the Praises which Christ returned to God, that the Gospel was received by the Mean and Humble, whilst the great Men of the World, and those who were look'd upon as the Wisest, did reject it. It is not to worldly Persons, and those that are filled with a good Opinion of themselves, that God reveals himself ; but it is to the Meek and Lowly, and to such as are of a sincere Heart. V. Let us also observe what our Lord has so strongly assured us, that we are happy in being instructed by Him, and in knowing those Truths of the Gospel which were not known by the ancient Prophets as they are by us ; but let us remember at the same time, that if we do not make a good Use of our Happiness, such Knowledge will only serve to render us more miserable, and that it will be much better for us to have never enjoy'd it.

C H A P. X. 25,—42.

I. **C**H R I S T answers one of the Scribes, who asked Him, what he must do to obtain everlasting Life. II. To teach that Doctor of the Law, that all Men are our Neighbours, He proposes to him the Parable of a Man that fell into the Hands of Thieves. III. Christ going to lodge in the House of *Martha* and *Mary*, takes occasion to commend the Piety of *Mary*,
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who kept close to Him, that she might hear Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS furnishes us with Three Instructions.
 I. That the chief Command of God, and the Sum of all Religion is, to love God above all Things, and our Neighbour as our selves, and that this is what we are bound to do, if we desire to attain to eternal Life. II. That there is no Body who is not our Neighbour, and whom we ought not to love. This is what Christ teaches us by the Parable of the *Jew*, who being wounded by Thieves, was not assisted, neither by a Priest, nor by a Levite, tho' they were his own Country Men; but was relieved by a *Samaritan*, who was a Stranger, and of a People hated by the *Jews*. The Design of Christ was thereby to shew, that all Men, without Exception, even Strangers, and those that don't love us, are our Neighbours; that we are obliged to love them all, to do good to them, and to succour the Unfortunate with all our Might. III. The third Instruction is taken from that which is said in this Chapter, of *Martha* and *Mary*. The Judgment our Lord passed upon the Behaviour of those two Sisters teaches us, that our chief Care ought to be to adhere to Him, and to hearken to his Word; and that the Employments of this Life, even such as are lawful, ought never to make us neglect the Thing that is most important of all: Let us therefore always set this Lesson before our Eyes; let us always remember, that there is one only Thing necessary, and, like *Mary*, let us chuse that good Part which shall never be taken from us. God grant us Grace to do it. *Amen.*

C H A P. XI. 1, — 28.

WHAT we are going to read, contains these Four Heads. I. Christ instructs his Disciples about Prayer. II. He cures a Demoniac, and returns an Answer to the *Pharisees*, who said that it was by the Power of Satan he cast out Devils. III. He proposes the Parable of a Man, in whom the evil Spirit enters after it had gone out of him. IV. He speaks of the Happiness of those, who hear his Word and keep it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first Instruction which we ought to carry away with us, relates to Prayer, and particularly to the Lord's Prayer. This Divine Prayer having *Jesus Christ* for its Author, and including all that is most important for us to ask, first, with respect to the Glory of God, and in the next Place, to our own Wants, as well for the Body as the Soul, we ought to present it to God with all possible Submission and Attention; and at the same time, with a firm Trust that God will hear us. Our Lord teaches us moreover, that Prayer is of a great Efficacy when it is made with Fervour and Perseverance, and when we ask of God real Goods, that is to say, spiritual Goods; all this ought to stir us up powerfully to pray with Zeal, and not to faint under this holy Exercise.

II. The Blasphemy of the *Pharisees*, who attributed to the Devil the Miracle which Christ wrought by virtue of the Spirit of God, is an Example of desperate Malice. We see hereby that Men, who have a wicked Heart, and resist the Grace of God, may fall into the utmost

most Impiety; that they render unprofitable the strongest Means used by God to overcome their Hardness, and that even they are more and more confirmed in their Wickedness, whereby they put an invincible Bar to their own Salvation, exposing themselves to the most terrible Punishment. III. The Similitude of the evil Spirit, that came out of him that was possess'd, shews, what would happen to the *Jews*, who had not laid hold of the Advantage of Christ's Presence, and of his Miracles; namely, that they would fall into a greater Obdurateness, and would feel the Divine Vengeance; this is likewise what happens to all such, who, after having receiv'd the Grace of God, do resist the Operation thereof, and embark themselves anew in Sin. IV. Let us learn, Lastly, from the Answer which our Saviour made to the Woman that admired his Discourse, that the most glorious, and the most advantageous Thing to our selves is, to hear the Word of God, and to observe what it commands, as is shewn by this Expression, which we ought carefully to remember; *Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.*

C H A P. XI. 29,—54.

TH E S E are the Contents of what we are going to read. I. Our Lord reproves the Unbelief of the *Jews*, by setting before them the Example of the *Ninevites*, and of the Queen of *Sheba*. II. He tells them, that such their Unbelief could not hinder his Doctrine, which was as a Light to lighten Mankind, from being preached; and He shews, that, in order to receive any benefit from it, our Eye must be pure and single, which is as much as to say, our Minds must be free and disingag'd from
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Prejudice and Passion. III. Being invited to dine with a *Pharisee*, He declaims against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, reproaching them for their Hypocrisie, Pride, and Infidelity, and threatning them with the Judgments of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE must consider here, I. That if the Example of the Queen of *Sheba*, and that of the *Ninevites*, condemned the unbelieving *Jews*, much more will it condemn us, if we don't obey the Gospel, since God has granted us yet more Light and more Grace than He did to the *Jews*, who lived at the Time of Christ. II. What our Saviour said of the Candle set in a Candlestick, and of the Eye, which is the Light of the Body, signifies these two Things: The one, that He had made known his Doctrine to his Disciples, to the end, that they might spread it every where; and the other, that our Minds must be rightly disposed, and our Hearts pure and sincere, in order to receive and to understand the Excellency of the said Doctrine. III. We have seen our Lord reproaching the *Pharisees* for observing an external Purity, for affecting great Appearances of Virtue, Piety, Zeal, and Humility, and for shewing a great Respect to the Memory of the Prophets, whilst their Hearts were filled with Pride and Covetousness, whilst they persecuted those whom God had sent to them, and hinder'd Men from believing in Him; for which Reasons, He threatens them with total Destruction. Hereby we may see in how great Guilt Men involve themselves, when they suffer Pride and Covetousness to possess their Hearts, when they reject the Word of God, and turn others
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away from Faith and Holiness. Above all, this Discourse of our Lord teaches us, that God abhors Hypocrisie; that those who go no farther than to an outward Purity, and neglect that of the Mind and Conscience, are an Abomination to Him. Let us therefore study true Holiness. Let us remember that God chiefly has respect to the inward Parts, and that the only Way to please Him is, to have an upright Heart, and to be filled with Charity; to be truly Humble, to receive his Word with submission, and to contribute all that in us lies to bring other Men to Faith and Salvation.

C H A P. XII. 1,—34.

THIS Chapter contains an excellent Discourse of our Lord, and we ought very carefully to hearken to the Reading of it. I. He exhorts his Disciples not to dissemble the Truths which they had learned of Him, but to declare them publickly; and that the Fear of Men might not hinder them from so doing, He warns them to fear none but God, and to make an open Confession of the Truth, and promises to defend and assist them when they should appear before the great Men of the World. II. Upon the Occasion of a Man, who had a Dispute with another about an Inheritance, He declaims against Covetousness, shewing by the Parable of a rich Man, the Folly of such as care for nothing but heaping up Wealth; and telling them, that they should not take care for the Necessities of Life, but depend upon Providence, and to be chiefly solicitous for what relates to the Kingdom of God. III. He assures his Disciples, that tho' they were weak, and but few in Number, they should not fear the Want

Want of whatever was necessary to them, and He exhorts them to make a right Use of worldly Goods.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CH R I S T instructs us here about the Profession of Truth, and the Love of worldly Goods. I. Upon the first Head, we see that Christians, and especially the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, ought to make a publick Profession of the Truth, without standing in Fear of Men, since Men can only kill the Body, whereas God can cast both Soul and Body into Hell. Our Lord declares moreover, that God watches over those who fear Him, and who suffer for his sake; that He assists them by his Spirit; that at the last Day He will own them for his that shall have had the Courage to call themselves his Disciples; but that He wont own those who, through fear of Death, shall not have dared to make an open Confession of their Faith. These are very strong Considerations, to animate us to a frank and sincere Profession of Christianity. II. Let us seriously reflect upon what our Lord says concerning the Love of worldly Goods, and upon the Parable of the Man that had heaped up great Wealth, but died at the Time he thought to enjoy them. Christ was willing to shew thereby, that it is a great Folly to care only for gathering of Riches, which we must leave when we come to die, and to neglect the acquiring heavenly Goods, which are solid and eternal. He has likewise exhorted us not to disquiet our selves for the Wants of the Body, but to trust to Providence, which provides for the Necessities of all Creatures; to seek before all Things the Kingdom of God, and to employ our Wealth in Alms, in order to
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secure to our selves thereby the Possession of everlasting Riches. These are most wholesome Instructions. Let us beseech God, that He will give us Grace, carefully to remember them, and to conform our Thoughts and Behaviour thereto.

C H A P. XII. 35,—59.

CH R I S T does Four Things here. I. He exhorts his Disciples to watch, and to be continually prepared for his Coming. II. He represents to them, that the Duties of which He had discours'd, related to them in a particular Manner, they being as it were Stewards, appointed in the House of their Master, for the Instruction of the rest; and that having receiv'd a greater Knowledge of the Will of God, they would be treated with greater Severity if they did not perform it. III. He warns them, that great Troubles would arise in the World upon the Account of his Doctrine. IV. He laments the Blindness of the *Jews*, who did not acknowledge that the Time of the Messiah was come, and He exhorts them to lay hold of that Opportunity, and to reconcile themselves with God whilst it was in their Power.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LE T us learn from hence, I. That since we are ignorant when Christ will come, and that we may be called every Moment to give up our Accounts to Him, we ought always to watch, and to apply our selves incessantly to our Duty, to the end, that when He comes, He may find us employ'd in Well-doing. II. That those to whom God has given his Knowledge,

ledge, and chiefly, the Ministers of the Church, are bound to use it for the Good of others, and to the Glory of their Master, if they would not be punished as unfaithful Servants; that, in general, He who knows the Will of God, and does it not, shall be treated with greater Severity, and that God will require a greater Account of those, to whom He shall have granted more Light, and more Grace. III. What our Lord says, that He was come to kindle Fire and Division in the World, does not signify, that He came with such a Design, nor that the Gospel tends to set Men at variance; since that, on the contrary, the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, and the Gospel, have no other end, but to cause Peace to reign; but his Meaning was, that Mankind, by an effect of their Malice, would take occasion from his Doctrine to hate and persecute one another. Our Lord warns his Disciples thereof, that they might not be stagger'd when the Thing should come to pass; wherefore neither ought we to be any more surpriz'd, when we see that Troubles are excited in the World upon the Account or Pretence of Religion. IV. If the *Jews* were obliged to own, that the Time of the Manifestation of the Messiah was come, we ought to be much more convinced thereof; and to make a better Use than the *Jews* did of the Happiness we have, to live in a Time in which the Mercy of God is so clearly revealed, and hasten to make our Peace with Him, and to prevent his Judgment, before we are called to appear in his Presence.

C H A P. XIII. 1,—17.

OUR Lord exhorts, I. the *Jews* to take warning from that which happened to certain *Galileans* whom *Pilate* had put to Death whilst they were Offering their Sacrifices, and from those eighteen Persons who had been killed by the Fall of a Tower. II. He proposes in this View, the Parable of the barren Fig-Tree. III. He cures a Woman that had been ill and crooked for eighteen Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CH R I S T teaches us here, I. That we must not imagine, that those whom some great misfortune befalls, are always the most Criminal; nor that we are better than they, because God is pleased to spare us; but that He often bears with the Guilty, for Reasons of Wisdom and Goodness, whilst He afflicts others that are not greater Sinners than they; wherefore, instead of Condemning those whom God visits, and instead of Flattering our selves, we should repent and grow better by the Misfortunes that happen to them, lest we should be handled more severely than they. II. The Meaning of the Parable of the barren Fig-Tree was, that God, who had already shewn great Patience towards the *Jews*, did then make use of the last Means for their Conversion, by causing them to be called to Repentance by Christ; after which they were to be destroyed, as it actually happened in a few Years from thence. This Parable sets before our Eyes, how patiently and graciously God bears with Sinners, making use of the most efficacious Methods to bring them

to Repentance ; but we may likewise learn, that by their Obstinacy and Impenitence, they draw upon themselves the utmost Miseries. III. We have seen, that Christ, by an effect of his Power, and of his great Love, having healed a Woman that went double for eighteen Years together, there were some who were scandaliz'd at his doing this Miracle on the Sabbath-Day. What Christ says, to stop the Mouths of those People, and to convince them of their Ignorance as well as of their Wickedness, teaches us, that the Practice of Charity and good Works, is the most necessary thing in Religion ; that these Duties are always in Season ; and that we should let slip no Occasion of Discharging them, tho' there should be People of so evil a Disposition as to be offended at them.

C H A P. XIII. 18,——35.

OUR Lord proposes, I. The Comparison of a Grain of Mustard, and that of Leaven. II. He answers the Question that was ask'd Him, whether there was but few that would be saved ; He exhorts us to enter timely into the Way of Salvation ; He describes the Despair of those that should be excluded from it ; and He foretels, that the unbelieving *Jews*, who had not made any Advantage of his Presence, should be shut out of the Kingdom of God, whilst other Nations would be admitted. III. Upon the Warning which was given Him, that *Herod* sought to put Him to Death, He declares He did not fear that cunning and deceitful Prince ; He says, that his Ministry was drawing towards a Conclusion, and that He should really lose his Life in a short Time, but that He should suffer Death

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in *Jerusalem*, and not in *Galilee*, where *Herod* reign'd ; upon which occasion, He deplores the Ingratitude, Obdurateness, and Destruction of that City.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Parables of the Mustard-Seed, and of the Leaven, signifie, that tho' the Gospel was received by very few, whilst our Saviour was in the World, and that the Beginnings of his Kingdom were very weak, it should be establish'd in all Places, and in a very small space of Time, as it fell out accordingly ; which proves the Divinity of the Gospel. II. We ought carefully to meditate upon the Answer which our Lord returned to those that asked Him, whether there would be but few People saved : *Strive*, says He, *to enter into the Strait-Gate : For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* These Words teach us, that instead of putting vain and curious Questions about the Salvation of others, our principal Care ought to be, to attain to it our selves ; that we ought to take continual Pains for it, and to begin early ; that when the Opportunity is lost, we shall not be admitted any more ; and that then, all that will remain to the Wicked for their Part, will be nothing but Remorse and Despair, to see themselves excluded from the Blessings of Heaven through their own fault. III. We have seen that our Lord feared neither the Craft nor Cruelty of *Herod*, because He knew that He was not to die in *Galilee*, but at *Jerusalem*. This shews us, that wicked Men cannot always execute their Designs, much less those of God, and that we need fear nothing when we walk in our Calling. Lastly, The Tenderneſs wherewith our Lord laments the

Ingratitude and Destruction of *Jerusalem*, by saying, that He would have screen'd the *Jews* from the Judgments of God, but that they would not ; shews very plainly, that God has no other Views nor Designs, with regard to Men, but those of Love ; and that no evil befalls them, but what they bring upon themselves, by despising his Goodness, and by slighting and rejecting the Offers of his Grace.

C H A P. XIV.

I. **O** U R Lord dining with a *Pharisee*, cures a Dropical Person; and proves, that Men ought not to be offended therewith, tho' that Miracle was done on a Sabbath-day. II. He gives Lessons of Humility and Charity to those who sat at Table with Him. III. He proposes to them the Parable of the Feast, to which those that were invited would not go. IV. He declares that those who would be his Disciples, should be ready to forsake all that was most dear to them, and even their Lives, and shews, by two Similitudes, the Necessity of that Duty.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T** H E Cure which Christ granted to the Hydropical Man shews, that He was always ready to do good to Men, and that there was no sort of Distemper which He did not heal ; and what He said to those, who did not approve of his working Miracles upon a Sabbath-Day, shews, that we must avoid rash and hypocritical Censures, and lay hold upon all Occasions that offer, to do Works of Goodness and Charity. II. The second Lesson we have here, relates to Humility and Charity ; Christ

recommends to us both those Duties, by saying, that they who endeavour to exalt themselves shall be abased before God, and even before Men; whereas those that are humble and lowly, shall be exalted; and by exhorting us not to imitate those worldly People, who only welcome the Rich and their Friends, but despise and neglect the Poor and Unfortunate. III. The Parable of the Feast signifies, that the *Jews*, and especially the chiefest among them, were about to be rejected, for not having embraced the Invitations which God made them by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; and that those who were the most despis'd, and even the *Gentiles* themselves, should receive those Favours which the *Jews* had rejected. This also relates to Christians, who do not answer their Call, and who, upon frivolous Excuses, and from the Attachment they have to the Things of the Earth, neglect the Offers of Divine Mercy, and by this means lose the Right they have to Salvation. IV. Christ warns us most expressly, that in order to be his Disciples, we must first renounce our selves, and every thing that may hinder us from following Him. 'Tis with this View, that He proposes the Parable of a Man that was going to build a Tower, and that of one King who was about to fight with another. By which He teaches us, that we must not lightly or inconsiderately engage in his Service; and that before we assume the Name of Christians, and make Profession thereof, we should examine our selves, and see whether we be firmly resolved to be faithful to Him, and whether we shall have the Courage to resist Temptation, to bear our Cross, and even to induce others to the Practice of the same Faith and Piety, by our Prudence and good Example.

C H A P. XV.

THIS is the Design and Subject of this Chapter; the *Pharisees* being offended at our Saviour's eating with Sinners, He proposes three Parables to them. I. That of the lost Sheep. II. That of the Piece of Money that was lost. And, III. That of the Prodigal Son. His Design was to shew by these three Parables, that God calls Sinners to Repentance, and that therefore the *Pharisees* were to blame to find fault with his keeping Company with those People.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE three Similitudes related in this Chapter, tend all to the same Purpose; which is, to set before our Eyes the great Mercies of God to Sinners; and to shew, that their Conversion is very acceptable to Him, and that the holy Angels are rejoiced at it; all such as love God ought likewise to be glad, and even to contribute every thing in their Power thereto, and not to be sorry or jealous, as were the *Pharisees*, who could not bear to see *Jesus* in the Company of Men of an evil Life. This is what is chiefly denoted by the Parable of the lewd Son, by whom our Lord represents those that were great Sinners, or counted such; the Return of that Son to his Father's House, is a Type of the Conversion of such Sinners. The Tenderneſs with which his Father received him, shews, that God takes Pleasure in the Repentance and Amendment of Sinners, and that He is full of Goodneſs towards them. The Jealouſie and Concern which the eldest Son shewed, because his Brother had been receiv'd ſo kindly

kindly and joyfully, represents the Temper of those *Pharisees*, who thought themselves better than other Men, and who were offended at our Lord's eating and keeping Company with Publicans and Sinners. That's the Meaning of this instructive Parable. It furnishes us with several very useful Reflexions: We see thereby the Deviations of Sinners, and the criminal Abuse they make of the Favours of God; we see likewise the Goodness of God in Chastising them, in order to bring them back to their Duty; the Return of those that come to God by Repentance; the Pardon which He grants them, and the Joy that their Conversion ought to excite in the Minds of all pious and charitable Persons. These are Instructions, to which all of us ought most seriously to attend, which we ought carefully to read over and over, and meditate upon all the Parts thereof; but Sinners especially are bound to apply this Parable to themselves, to the end that they may be encourag'd thereby to return to God by a ready and sincere Repentance. The Lord grant them this Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVI.

I. **C**H R I S T shews by the Parable of the unfaithful Steward, the Use we ought to make of the good Things of the World. II. Next, He represents, that the Love of Riches is very dangerous; and reproveth the *Pharisees* for their Covetousness, and for opposing the Establishment of the Kingdom of God from the Time of *John* the Baptist. III. And *Lastly*, to illustrate and confirm what He had said about the Use of Riches, He adds the Parable of the wicked rich Man.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS whole *Sixteenth* Chapter of St. *Luke* tends to teach us, how we must use the good Things of this World. What is here said of this unfaithful Steward, who, to make himself Friends, discharged his Master's Debtors of Part of what they owed him, must not be understood, as if Christ commended the Proceeding of that Man, since such an Action would be a crying Injustice, and breach of Trust. He only design'd to teach us thereby, that as this Steward rais'd himself Friends by the Goods of his Master, before he left his Service; so we ought to secure for our selves the Entrance into a better Life, by employing our Wealth in pious and charitable Purposes. 'Tis to stir us up to this Duty, that Christ says, that those who cannot make a right Use of the corruptible Things of this Life, do thereby shew, that they are unworthy to possess heavenly Things. 'Tis with the same View He declares, that we cannot serve God, and set our Heart upon Riches at the same time; and this is what He proves by the Example of the *Pharisees*, who were covetous; and to whom He says, that although they had a very high Esteem of themselves, they were abominable in the Sight of God, and the professed Enemies of his Kingdom. But it is particularly what He aims at by the Parable of the wicked rich Man and of *Lazarus*, whereby our Lord represents what happens to those, who, instead of assisting the Miserable, employ their Wealth in gratifying their own Luxury and Sensuality. Besides which, we see in this Parable, that as the Condition of Men is very different in this Life, so it will likewise be after Death; we discover thereby, that the
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Righteous enjoy sweet repose after their Death, whilst the Wicked are tormented, and that the Condition of them both is unchangeable and irretrievable. The Answer which the Patriarch *Abraham* returned to the wicked rich Man, who pray'd him to send *Lazarus* to his Brethren, is a Lesson to us, that God gives us, during this Life, by his holy Word, Means sufficient to avoid Destruction; that those who do not lay hold on these Means, are without excuse; that they must not expect that God should work Miracles for their Conversion; and that altho' He should, yet such Miracles will not convince them. All these Instructions are of the utmost Importance; let us take good heed to them, and beseech God to imprint them in our Hearts.

C H A P. XVII. I, — 19.

Mention is made here, I. Of Offences. II. Of Pardon of Sin. III. Of the Efficacy of Faith. IV. Of the Obligation we lye under of doing what God commands us, without pretending to merit thereby. V. The History of the Curing of the Ten Lepers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Instructions contained in this Part of the Chapter, are the following: I. That the giving Scandal or Offence, is a great Evil; that as Men are made, it is an unavoidable Thing that there will happen Offences, but that those who are the Occasion of them, shall receive the Punishment. II. That we ought not to bear any Grudge against those that offend us, but that we must pardon them, and even pardon them always, tho' they should in-
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jure us very often. III. That Faith being as necessary and as efficacious towards pleasing God, and in order to our Salvation, as it was formerly to work Miracles, we should strengthen our selves more and more therein, and with the Apostles, beseech the Lord to increase our Faith. IV. That being the Servants of God, we ought to do all that such a Master commands us, and to do it with Zeal, and at the same time with deep Humility, remembering that we are but unworthy and unprofitable Servants, that we do no more than part of our Duty; that therefore we can plead no merit, and that if God vouchsafes to reward our Obedience, it is in Consequence of his pure Favour and Bounty. V. The principal Reflexions that may be made upon the Cure of the Ten Lepers are, that there was but one who came back to thank Christ, and to give Glory to God; and further, that this Person was a *Samaritan*, and that he shewed more Piety and Gratitude than the rest, who were *Jews*. Men wish to be deliver'd when they are in Pain or Sufferings, but as soon as they have obtained what they desire, they presently forget the Favour God has granted them, and become unthankful. Let us avoid such a guilty Behaviour as that was. Let us be sensible of all the Mercies God bestows upon us. Let us treasure them up in our Remembrance, and shew our Acknowledgment and Love to Him, not only by continual Thanksgivings, but chiefly by our Obedience, and by the good Use we make of his Favours.

C H A P. XVII. 20,—37.

I. **T**H E *Pharisees* having asked Christ, when the Kingdom of God should come; He tells them, that it would not be attended with worldly Pomp and Splendour, and even that it was already come, and that it was in the midst of them, tho' they did not observe it. II. From hence He takes occasion to warn those that heard Him, not to follow the false Messiahs which would arise, telling them that there would come a Time, and quickly too, when they should have reason to bewail the Advantages they then enjoy'd, of having the Messiah among them; and that the *Jews* should be surpris'd and overwhelm'd by the Judgments of God, as Mankind was formerly by the Flood, and as were the Inhabitants of *Sodom*, by the Conflagration of their City.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to consider here, I. What Christ said to the *Jews*, that the Kingdom of God was not to come with Splendour, and that the said Kingdom was already come, and that it was among them. This is enough to shew, that the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* is altogether Spiritual and Heavenly; and that those who, like us, are so happy as to have this Kingdom in the midst of them, should take care that they do not fall into the same Sin as did the *Jews*, which was, not to acknowledge their Happiness, nor to make a right Use thereof, which nevertheless is but too usual. For which purpose, let us consider what our Lord adds in this Chapter, namely, that the *Jews* would soon repent their neglecting the

the Advantage of his Presence, and that they would be overtaken by divine Vengeance, as the Inhabitants of the first World were by the Deluge, and as the Fire from Heaven overtook the People of *Sodom*. These Warnings do likewise concern us; those among us who shall have slighted the precious Advantages we enjoy, and the Season of the Forbearance and Mercy of God, will be thus surpriz'd in their Blindness, and in their Security, and will perish in their Impenitency. Since now our Lord has forewarned us of these Things, let us reflect upon them continually; and in the Expectation of his Coming, let us live in Watchfulness, in Prayer, and in the Exercise of all sorts of good Works. May He himself grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVIII. 1, — 17.

I. **O** U R Lord proposes the Parable of the unjust Judge. II. That of the Pharisee and the Publican. And, III. He lays his Hands upon little Children that were brought to Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **S** T. *Luke* informs us, at the very entrance of this *Eighteenth* Chapter, that the end of the Parable of the unjust Judge, is to teach us, that we must always pray without being wearied. This is what we learn by our Saviour's Expressions, namely, that if Men, and even Men as wicked as that unjust Judge, suffer themselves to be overcome at last by Prayers and repeated Sollicitations, God, who is Righteousness and Goodness it self, will much more hearken to the Prayers that are offer'd up to Him.

Him with zeal and perseverance. But the chief Aim of our Lord was, to convince us thereby, that God hears the Cries and Prayers of his Elect, and that He will take severe Vengeance on all such as oppressed them unjustly. II. By the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ would give us to understand, that such who had a favourable Opinion of themselves, like the *Pharisees*, and despised others, were very odious to the Lord, by reason of their Pride and Hypocrisie; and that those who are looked upon as the greatest Sinners, become the Objects of his Mercy, when they are penetrated with a profound Humility, and sincere Repentance, as the Publican who is here mentioned, and who standing afar off, *would not lift up so much as his Eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner!* Besides which, the Example of this *Pharisee*, who boasted that he was neither an Extortioner, nor Unjust, nor an Adulterer; that he fasted twice a Week, and gave Tythes of all that he possessed, but who was not justified before God, proves, that Men may be free from great Crimes, and have even an appearance of Piety, and yet be rejected by God, if their Heart be filled with Pride, Covetousness, or other Passions. III. And *Lastly*, We may make three Observations upon our Lord's laying his Hands upon the Children that were brought to Him, and upon his praying for them. The *first* is, That the Age of little Children does not hinder our Lord from loving and blessing them. The *second*, That in Devoting them to God by Prayer, and the Ordinance of Baptism, we conform our selves to what Christ did on this Occasion. The *third*, That the Kingdom of God is only reserv'd for such as are Children in Innocence, Meekness, and Simplicity.

C H A P. XVIII. 18,—43.

I. **O** U R Lord returns an answer to a young Man, who asked Him, what he must do to be saved? From whence He takes Occasion to say, that Riches would obstruct the Salvation of many People; and He makes glorious Promises to those that will forsake worldly Goods for the Love of Him. II. He foretels his Sufferings. And, III. He restores Sight to a blind Man near *Jericho*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W** H A T we are to gather from the Discourse between our Lord and the rich young Man, mention'd in this Chapter, is, that we can't obtain everlasting Life but by keeping the Commandments of God; besides which, there are certain Seasons wherein we are bound to forsake all we have, and expose our selves to Poverty and Persecution. The Surprize and Sorrow that seiz'd this young Man, after hearing what Christ had said to him, shews, that the good Things of this Life are always a great Obstacle to our Salvation, and as our Lord says, it is very hard for those that be rich to enter into the Kingdom of God, because they commonly set their Heart upon Riches. Let us make a good Use of this Warning, and if we be not called, as were the Apostles, to leave all Things to follow Christ, let us not cleave too closely to worldly Goods, but let us employ them in assisting the Miserable, and then we shall partake, both in this Life and the next, of the Rewards that our Saviour promises those that shall have renounced the Love of Riches. II. It is next to be observed, that
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in Proportion to the approach of our Saviour's Death, He spoke more plainly of it to the Apostles, to the end that they should be less surpris'd thereat; but the Apostles could not comprehend that He was to die, which proceeded from the Prejudices and Opinion they had taken up, that, as the Messiah, He was to Reign gloriously here upon Earth. III. It must, *Lastly*, be observ'd upon the Healing the blind Man, that Christ wrought new Miracles towards the end of his Life, and as He drew near to *Jerusalem*, in order to give fresh Proofs of his divine Mission to his Disciples, and to the People; and in order also to lessen the Offence which his Cross and his Death was quickly to give them.

C H A P. XIX. 1,—28.

THIS Part of the Chapter comprehends two Heads. I. The History of the Conversion of *Zaccheus*. II. The Parable of the ten Pieces of Money.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E R E are three Things chiefly to be observ'd upon the History of *Zaccheus*. The *first*, That *Jesus Christ* came to call Sinners to Repentance; and that those Persons whom the *Jews* look'd upon as great Sinners, and with whom they would keep no Correspondence, such, for instance, as the Publicans, should be receiv'd into the Divine Covenant. The *second*, That Christ communicates himself to those that seek Him; and that when He offers himself to us, and calls us to Him, we should obey his Call with readiness and joy, as *Zaccheus* did. The *third*, That those who
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are possess'd with ill-gotten Goods, ought to restore and put them away ; and that the Rich are particularly obliged to be charitable to the Poor. II. As for the Parable of the Man that went a long Journey, and left ten Pounds, that's to say, several Sums of Money in the Hands of his Servants ; our Lord propos'd it, as St. *Luke* observes, to undeceive those that thought He was about to be declared King, and that his Kingdom would be manifested with Splendour in this World, and, on the contrary, to make them comprehend that He should be rejected ; but that however, such as would not submit themselves to Him, should feel the Effects of his Power, and undergo the Punishment of their Rebellion, whilst those that have served Him faithfully shall be exalted to great Glory. The Use we are to make of this Parable, is to observe from thence, *first*, That God grants us his Light and Grace, to the end we may improve them to his Glory, and to the Salvation of other Men. *Secondly*, That some make a right Use of his Grace, and others abuse it. *Thirdly*, That when our Lord shall come to judge Mankind, He will gloriously reward those that shall have employ'd his Gifts in the Manner the most conformable to his Intentions, but He will punish with rigour and justice too the Ingratitude and Treachery of those that have abused them.

C H A P. XIX. 29,—48.

I. **C**H R I S T makes his Entry into *Jerusalem*. II. He weeps over the Destruction of that City. III. He drives out of the Temple those that prophaned it.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **C**H R I S T was pleased to make his Entry into *Jerusalem* the *Sunday* before his Death, to shew that He was that King, of whom the Prophets made mention; but He perform'd it after a very plain and simple Manner, riding upon a young Ass, to the End that it might appear, that his Kingdom was not of this World. That which then happen'd, ought to have made so much the greater Impression upon the Apostles, as they had seen, by what Christ told them concerning the Ass, a new Proof of his infinite Knowledge. We ought very seriously to reflect upon this Event, in which we so sensibly perceive the Glory of *Jesus Christ*, and at the same time his perfect Meekness, and it should engage us to praise the Lord, as did those who formerly attended Christ, that God has establish'd his Kingdom, and sent us the Redeemer of the World. II. We are next to observe, that when our Saviour came thus to *Jerusalem*, He lamented with Tears the Desolation of that City, and the Calamities that were about to fall upon the *Jews*, because they had not known, but neglected, the Time wherein God had visited them in Mercy, by the means of his Son. This was a very plain Proof of the Goodness of the Lord, even to such as had rejected Him; and it shews us likewise, that no Body perishes but through their own Fault, and because they don't lay hold of the Season in which God visits them, and offers them his Grace; and that therefore we should know the Things that belong to our Peace before they be hid from our Eyes. III. And, *Lastly*, Christ, by driving out of the Temple those that sold and traded in it, made ap-

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pear his Divine Authority, as well as his great Zeal. Let us conclude from thence, that we grievously offend God, and expose our selves to his Wrath, when we behave our selves irreverently in those Places where He is publicly served, and when we only pay Him a false and hypocritical Worship; this will be infinitely more odious to Him than the Abuse that was introduced, and prevail'd among the *Jews*, of Buying and Selling, within the Precincts of the Temple, the Things that were necessary for sacrificing.

C H A P. XX. 1,—18.

I. **C**H R I S T answers the Chief among the *Jews*, who examin'd Him whence He had his Authority. And, II. proposes to them the Parable of the Husbandmen.

Reflexions after the Reading.

UPON what we have heard, we are to remark, I. That when the *Jews* demanded of Christ, whence that Authority proceeded which He ascrib'd to Himself, He would not answer them directly, but contented himself with putting them to Silence, by asking whether the Baptism of *John* was from Heaven, or from Men? Our Lord spoke after this manner, because, even tho' He should have told them that his Authority was from Heaven, they would not have believ'd Him; however, He gave them to understand thereby, that He had receiv'd his Power and Calling from God, as well as *John* the Baptist, and that their Blindness was wilful. As for us, who believe that the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, together with that of *John* the Baptist, was from God, we should render

der our selves guilty of a Rebellion yet more criminal than that of the *Jews*, if we did not submit thereto. II. The Similitude of the Husbandmen signifies, that the *Jews*, after having rejected the Prophets that God had sent them at several times, would crucifie his own Son; for which reason they would be destroyed, and deprived of the Benefit of the divine Covenant; that the *Gentiles* should be receiv'd into it in their stead; and that *Jesus Christ*, after having been rejected by the Chief of the *Jews*, would be invested with a supreme Power, and would exercise his Judgments upon their Nation. What this Parable typified, was accomplish'd after the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord. *Jerusalem* was destroy'd, and the *Gentiles* came into the Church. However, that which befel the *Jews*, ought to be an Example to us, and teach us, that God takes away his Grace and his Covenant from those that abuse them, since they don't less reject Christ, than the *Jews* themselves did formerly.

C H A P. XX. 19,—47.

THIS Reading contains the Four following Heads. I. The Answer of *Jesus Christ* to the Question that was put, whether it were lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor? II. His Answer to another Question of the *Sadducees* about the Resurrection. III. The Question He put to the *Pharisees*, concerning the Messiah's being called the Son of *David*. IV. A Warning to take care of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Design of the *Pharisees* in asking our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor, was to surprize and accuse Him either of being the Emperor's Enemy, if He should say that Tribute was not to be paid; or no Friend to his own Nation, if he should say it was: But *Jesus*, by an effect of his profound Wisdom, discover'd and avoided the Snare, by bidding them *render to Cesar the Things which be Cesar's, and unto God the Things which be God's*. Let us learn from thence, to submit our selves to the Authority of Princes, and to render them what is due to them; and at the same time religiously to discharge the Duties we lie under to God. II. We may observe the same Wisdom of *Christ* in the Answer He return'd to the *Sadducees*, who thought to have entangled Him by the Question they propos'd to Him about the Resurrection. He shewed them that the Dead must rise, by putting them in Mind, that God declares Himself the God of the Patriarchs, even after their Death, and of all such as imitate their Faith; from whence it follows, that it is impossible they should continue always under the Power of Death; and He added, that after the Resurrection, good Men should be immortal, and like to the Angels. This Discourse of our Lord ought fully to convince us, that the Dead will be rais'd, and should engage us to lead pure and godly Lives, to the end that we may become worthy to partake of Eternal Life, and of the Resurrection of the Righteous. III. The Question which *Christ* put to the *Pharisees*, how the Messiah could be both
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the Son and Lord of *David*, tended to make them sensible of their Ignorance, and to shew them the infinite Value of his Person; nevertheless He would not explain that Question to them more fully, because they would not have given credit to his Words. But it is plain to us, since we are assur'd that Christ as Man is *David's* Son, and *David's* Lord as He is the Son of God. IV. What our Saviour says against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* shews, that Covetousness, Pride, and Hypocrisie, are most odious Vices, and that we ought to beware of those in whom they are found, and most carefully to avoid the same Vices our selves.

C H A P. XXI. 1,—19.

WHAT we are about to read here, contains Two Things. I. The Judgment which Christ passed upon the poor Widow's Offering. II. What He said to his Disciples concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the End of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Judgment which Christ pronounced upon the Offering of that Widow, who threw two small Pieces of Money into a Box, in which private Persons put what they had a Mind to give for the Service of the Temple, teaches us, that what we devote to pious and charitable Uses, is pleasing to God when given with a willing Mind; and that the Offerings of poor People, when made heartily, and according to their Power, are as well receiv'd as those of the Rich. II. We are to consider, that whatever our Lord had foretold, in mentioning the Signs that should precede the

Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple, came to pass a few Years after. Several false Messiahs appear'd. *Judea* was ruined by War, by Famine, by Pestilence, and by all kind of Plagues. The Disciples of our Lord were persecuted, but they were likewise peculiarly protected by Heaven, as Christ had promised them. These Events will not suffer us to doubt of the Truth of the Gospel, and of the Certainty of what is there said about the second Coming of *Jesus Christ*, the last Judgment, and the End of the World. For which reason, we ought continually to meditate upon these Things, and by a constant Application to our Duty be prepar'd for them.

C H A P. XXI. 20,—38.

OUR Lord, after having spoken of those Signs that were to appear before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, discourses of the Destruction it self. He represents how terrible it would be, and the Dread wherewith the *Jews* would be then seiz'd ; He declares that these Things should come to pass before the Men of that Generation were all dead ; Lastly, He exhorts his Disciples to watch, to pray, and to live temperately, to the end they might not be surpriz'd at his Coming.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we have read concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, deserves our utmost Attention. This Destruction happen'd according as our Lord had prophesied, and at the Time which He had shewn, that is to say, about forty Years after his Ascension. The *Jews* found themselves reduced to the greatest

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Extremities ; they suffer'd all the Horrors of War ; their City was taken by the *Romans* ; they were put to the Edge of the Sword ; the Remainder of that People were dispers'd throughout the World, and we see, even to this Day, the *Jews* still scatter'd through every Country, and the City remaining in its Ruins. Predictions so plain and so positive as these we have just now read, and which have been, and yet are so punctually verified by the Event, prove, after an invincible manner, that Christ was sent from God, and that his Doctrine is both True and Divine. II. This Destruction of a Nation that was once so loved by God, and of a City He had chosen to establish his Worship in, ought to inspire us all with Fear, and it can be ascribed to nothing but that Sin which the *Jews* committed, in Rejecting and Crucifying the Saviour of the World. Thereby we may discover what Christians are to expect, who reject Him by their Unbelief and Disobedience, and how great will be their Terror and Despair when He shall come again in his Glory. Wherefore, if we would share in this Happiness, and not be surpriz'd by that dreadful Day ; let us improve the Advice of our Lord ; let us avoid imbarking our selves in Sensuality, and in the Love of Pleasures ; banish from our Hearts the Cares of this Life ; watch and pray continually. 'Tis what our Lord exhorts us to by the following Expressions, which conclude this Discourse : *Take heed to your selves, least at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

C H A P. XXII. 1,—23.

TH E Evangelist begins here the History of Christ's Passions, and relates, I. The Bargain *Judas* made with the *Jews*, to deliver up our Lord to them. II. How Christ celebrated the Passover, and instituted the holy Supper. III. His Predictions of the Treachery of *Judas*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Reflexions that are to be made here relate, I. To the Agreement made by *Judas* with the *Jews*. II. To the Celebration of the Passover, and the Institution of the Lord's Supper. III. To the Foretelling the Crime of *Judas*. First then, since it was Covetousness that induced *Judas* to commit so perfidious an Action against his Master, it must be acknowledged that this Passion, which few People think to be of so evil a Consequence, may draw Men into the worst of Crimes; wherefore we ought to secure our selves against it with all the Care imaginable. Upon the *second* Head, we are to observe, that as our Lord suffer'd Death at the Time of the Feast of the Passover, He thought fit then likewise to celebrate that Feast with his Disciples, and to institute the holy Supper, because this Sacrament was to succeed and to take Place of the *Jewish* Passover; by which we see, of how great Importance that holy Ceremony was which our Lord then establish'd, to remain, even to the End of the World, a Memorial of his Passion and Death; and with what Reverence, and with what Devotion we ought to partake of this holy Sacrament, as often as we approach the Lord's Table for that purpose.

purpose. *Thirdly*, Christ was pleased to declare, in the Presence of his Disciples, that one of them should betray Him, to the end, that they might own thereafter, that nothing befel their Master which He had not foreseen, and that He suffer'd Death voluntarily. From hence we may gather, that Christ had a perfect Knowledge of all Things, even of the Designs and Thoughts of Men; that therefore we cannot hide our selves from Him; and that it was the Love which He bore to us, that induc'd Him to undergo Death for our Salvation.

C H A P. XXII. 24,—46.

I. **T**HE Apostles disputing among themselves who should be the greatest in that Kingdom, which they fancied Christ was going to establish upon Earth, our Lord exhorts them to put away those carnal Thoughts they had formed concerning the Kingdom of the Messiah, and to substitute in their stead more humble Sentiments; promising them nevertheless to exalt them to great Glory in his Kingdom. II. Christ foretels St. *Peter's* Denial and Repentance; and warns his Disciples that they should from thenceforth be prepared to see Him suffer Death, and to be themselves dispers'd, and exposed to divers Dangers and Wants; on which account it is, as He tells them, that if they had a Purse, a Scrip, or a Sword, they should take them. III. He goes to the Garden of *Gethsemane*, where He is in an extreme Agony.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Lessons of Humility, and Renunciation of worldly Greatness, which Christ gave his Apostles, teach us, that it is not lawful too greedily to seek after Honour and Glory; but, according to the Example of our Saviour, who was so Humble, and contented to live in so mean a Condition, we ought likewise to exercise great Humility, and to persuade our selves, that the true Glory to which we should aspire, is that which Christ reserves in the Kingdom of God, for such as shall have been faithful to Him, and continued obedient in the midst of those Temptations and Trials to which they shall have been exposed. II. We have seen how our Lord foretold that St. Peter would deny Him, and how He assured him at the same time, that He had prayed for him, to the end that his Faith should not fail, and that he might rise from his Fall. The Sequel confirm'd the Truth both of the Prediction and Promise. We see thereby that our Saviour knows all Things, and that He knows us better than we know our selves. This is likewise a Warning to us, not to rely upon our own Strength, but to pray to God that He would vouchsafe to secure us against our own Weakness, and support us in such manner, that our Faith may not fail. III. In the Relation St. Luke gives of the Condition of our Lord in the Garden, we may observe the great Sorrow of his Soul, his Prayers to God, and his Resignation. His Anguish and Trouble should make us reflect upon the Horror of Sin, and the sad State of the Wicked, when they shall bear the Punishment due to their Crimes; his Prayers teach us to seek our Comfort and Strength, by ad-

addressing our selves to God under Affliction; and his Resignation to the Will of his Father, should teach us to submit our selves in all Things, even in the severest Trials, to what God shall be pleased to do with us.

C H A P. XXII. 47,—72.

I. **W**E see here how our Lord was apprehended by *Judas*, and what passed upon that Occasion. II. The Fall; And, III. the Repentance of *St. Peter*. IV. The Condemnation of Christ before the Council of the *Jews*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **U**PON that which passed when Christ was taken in the Garden, we must observe, that tho' He knew the Design of *Judas*, and tho' He could have escap'd Death, yet He deliver'd Himself into the Hands of the *Jews*, being resolv'd to die, that He might accomplish the Designs of God his Father. II. The Action of *St. Peter*, who smote with a Sword one of the Servants of the High Priest, shews the Zeal and Concern of that Apostle for his Master, but it proceeded likewise from Rashness, and a Spirit of Revenge, on which Account our Lord blam'd him for it. This teaches us, that Deeds of Violence and Anger, are unworthy the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*; wherefore we ought to shun them, and always imitate the great Meekness and Patience of our Saviour, who being able to punish those that came to take Him, and to defend himself against their Attempts, would not do it, but even gave a Proof of his Goodness and Mildness, as well as of his Power, by healing the Person *St. Peter* had wounded. III. The Fall of that Apostle, who,

who, after having shewed so much Zeal, deny'd his Master, is a great Example, by which those even that are never so piously and well inclined, ought to take Warning. Let us be sensible of our Weakness; let us fortifie our selves against our Inconstancy, and against Temptations, by Watchfulness and Prayer; and when we happen to fall at any time, let us rise again, as *St. Peter* did, by a speedy and lively Repentance, and by sincere Amendment of Life. IV. The Relation of Christ's Appearance before the Council of the *Jews*, shews, that He was not condemned for any Crime, and that He was wholly innocent, since the Sentence of his Condemnation was only grounded upon what He himself had said, that He was the Son of God. However, He own'd the same, and submitted to so unrighteous a Judgment; whereby He has given us the most convincing Proof imaginable of his Love, and an Example of Zeal and Patience, which we ought always to set before our Eyes.

C H A P. XXIII. 1,—25.

I. **C**H R I S T appears, and is accused before *Pilate*, and afterwards before *Herod*. II. By both whom He is declared innocent. III. *Pilate* endeavours to deliver Him: But, IV. being overcome by the Instances of the *Jews*, he condemns Him to Death.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E must have observ'd at first sight, the Injustice and Rage of the *Jews*, in the false Accusation they brought against Christ, of having design'd to raise a Sedition among the People, and to cause Himself to be declared

red King ; and by their pressing to have Him put to Death, in spite of all that *Pilate* could say to pacifie them, insomuch, that they chose rather to save the Life of a Murtherer and a Rebel. II. We find by this History, that the Innocence of Christ was own'd both by *Herod* and *Pilate*, and that the latter of them endeavour'd to deliver Him. III. It is to be observed, that when our Saviour appeared before *Herod*, He did not speak to him, nor return him any Answer, because the Questions that Prince put to Him did not proceed from any design of being better inform'd by Him, but from a vain Curiosity, and desire of seeing some Miracles wrought by Him. God does not manifest Himself but to such as seek for the Truth in Faithfulness, but He leaves the Wicked in their Blindness. IV. And above all, we ought to observe the Injustice of *Pilate*, who being convinced that Christ was wrongfully accused, condemned Him in Complaisance to the *Jews*, after having resisted a while. This is the manner of unjust Judges, and in general, of all those that sin against Light, and who have more regard and consideration for Men, and for the Motives of Policy, Interest, and Ambition, than to what God, Justice and Conscience require. This Example likewise shews, that it is to no purpose to have a few right Sentiments, and a faint Desire of doing our Duty, and even to withstand Temptation for a Time, if we give way to it at last. Upon all Occasions therefore we are bound to oppose wicked Men, and discharge our Duty, by pursuing with Courage and Steadiness the Motions of our Consciences, without turning aside for any Sollicitations, or other Reasons whatsoever.

C H A P. XXIII. 26,—56.

WE have here the History of the Passion of our Saviour; where we see, I. That which happen'd when He was led to Punishment, and whilst He was upon the Cross, and Dying. II. The Prodigies that happen'd thereupon. III. His Burial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E S E are the Observations which we may make upon the several Circumstances of our Lord's Passion. I. We may see by what He said to the Women of *Jerusalem*, who were weeping for Him, that at the very Time when they led Him to Punishment, and so unjustly put Him to Death, He was more sensible of the Calamities that were coming upon the *Jews*, than of his own Sufferings. This is a most pathetick Example of Meekness and Patience, and ought to convince us of the perfect Charity of Christ, and induce us to pardon those who use us unjustly, and to be more concern'd for others than for our selves. II. This Prayer which Christ made at the Time of his Crucifixion, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, ought to inspire us with the like noble Sentiments. III. Another Circumstance, and which is worthy of our Attention, is what St. *Luke* relates about the two Thieves that were crucified with our Saviour. In one of them, we see a terrible Obdurateness, which shews how far Men may carry Impiety and Wickedness; but in the other, who reproved his Companion, and called upon *Jesus* as his Saviour and King, though he saw Him nailed to the Cross, we may remark a wonderful Faith, a hearty

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Repentance, and a deep Humility. In the Promise our Lord made Him: *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, we have an instance of God's Mercy to penitent Sinners, which, however, must not be abus'd. This Promise does likewise assure us, that those who die in the Favour of God, do enter into a State of Happiness immediately after their Death. IV. Christ's Death and Burial are to be considered as the last Degree of his Humiliation, and the Accomplishment of the Sacrifice which He offer'd to God for the Attonement of our Sins. Thus we find therein the Foundation of our Faith and Confidence, and powerful Motives not to fear Death. *Lastly*, We are to consider, that the several Prodigies which happen'd whilst our Lord was upon the Cross, were design'd to shew, that He was really the Son of God; but this is what appeared yet more plainly afterwards, when He arose on the third Day after his Death.

C H A P. XXIV.

I. **T**HIS Chapter teaches us, that Christ being risen, appeared to the Women that went to his Sepulchre. II. And again, to Two of his Disciples as they were going to *Emmaus*. III. And at last, to other Apostles. IV. St. *Luke* concludes his Gospel, in relating the last Orders which our Lord gave his Apostles, and his Ascension.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard, I. How Christ being risen, shewed Himself to the Women that went to his Sepulchre. II. After that, to the two Disciples. III. And *Lastly*, to all his Disciples; who were entirely satisfied of his Resurrection, by touching his Body, and seeing Him eat in their Presence. These several Apparitions of our Lord, prove that He is risen, and ought powerfully to strengthen our Faith and our Hopes, which are all built upon this Resurrection. In the Discourse which our Saviour had with the two Disciples in the Way to *Emmaus*, we may perceive, that though they preserved a tender Remembrance of their Master, and that they had even some hopes of his Rising again, their Faith was as yet very weak; which proves that they did not believe the Resurrection but upon sure Grounds, nor till they were fully convinced thereof. On the other Hand, we observe, that Christ instructed them upon the Mystery of his Death and Resurrection, by explaining the Prophets that made mention thereof. This should induce us to read and meditate upon the Oracles of the Prophets, since we find therein Predictions so proper to confirm us in the Faith, especially since the Event has perfectly cleared up and verified the said Oracles. In the last Commands that Christ left with his Disciples, we find an Abstract of the Doctrine of the Gospel, which may be reduced to this: That *Jesus Christ* died; that He rose again, and that He sent his Apostles to declare throughout the World the Remission of Sins, and to persuade Men

to repent. *Lastly*, The Ascension of our Lord ought fully to convince us that He is the Son of God, and engage us to worship, and to submit our selves to Him, and to rejoice continually, whilst we reflect on the Glory to which He is exalted at the right Hand of his Father, and in the Hopes of being there admitted one Day our selves. Let us all beseech Him to grant us this Grace. *Amen.*





St. J O H N.



C H A P. I. 1,—18.



THE Gospel according to St. *John*, was writ a long Time after the other Gospels, and, as it is thought, near a Hundred Years after the Birth of Christ ; for which reason it is, that we see several Things therein which are not related by the other Evangelists. In that Part of the first Chapter we are about to read, St. *John* teaches, that *Jesus Christ* is God, that He is made Man by taking our Nature, and that He is come into the World to save Mankind, and to render all those that believe in Him the Children of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been read, instructs us in two Things ; to wit, I. In the infinite Worth of the Person of *Jesus Christ*, and the End for which He came into the World. As for his Per-

Person, St. *John* teaches us, that *Jesus Christ*, who is here called the Word, is God, and that this Word was made Flesh, that is to say, it was made Man, and assumed our Nature; he says moreover, that our Lord was much more Excellent than his forerunner, *John* the Baptist, who was sent from God to make Him known to the *Jews*. This obliges us to look upon Christ as our Saviour, and as our God, to receive his Doctrine as Heavenly and Divine, and to acknowledge how much God has loved us, in having given us his own Son for our Redemption. II. We have seen for what purpose Christ came into the World, namely, to be the Light of the World, to enlighten Mankind with the Knowledge of God, and to purchase for them the Right of becoming his Children; but we have likewise learned, that this Benefit is reserved only for those that believe in Him, and who are truly born of God. Thereby we see how great is the Excellence of the Gospel, and the Obligation we lie under of receiving with Faith and Thanksgiving that wholesome Doctrine preached by the only Son of God. Let us make a better Use of it than did the *Jews*, of whom St. *John* says: *He came to his own, but his own received Him not.* Let us shew, by our adherence to Christ, and by our Obedience, that we are of the Number of those who have received Him and believed in his Name. 'Tis thus we shall arrive at the Happiness and Glory of being the Children of God, and thereby of obtaining the Inheritance of Eternal Life.

C H A P. I. 19,—51.

ST. *John* relates here, I. The Testimony which *John* the Baptist render'd to our Lord, by disclosing to the *Jews* the Dignity of his Person, and the Nature and End of his Ministry. II. How our Lord made himself known to *Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel.*

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we are to consider in general upon the Witness which *John* the Baptist bore to our Lord is, that God sent this holy Prophet to make Christ known to the *Jews*, and to dispose them to look upon Him, not as a Temporal King, but as a Spiritual one, and as a Saviour that should atone for the Sins of Mankind, and would pour upon them the Gifts of the Spirit of God. 'Tis for this Reason, that *John* the Baptist said: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World. And, This is He which Baptizeth for the Holy Ghost.* The Pardon of Sins, and the Power of the Holy Ghost, which regenerates and sanctifies us, are therefore the two principal Graces that Christ has acquired for us, and to which we are bound to aspire. We ought likewise to observe the Humility, Zeal, and Faithfulness which *John* the Baptist exerted, by owning that he was not the Messiah, but only his Forerunner, and by abasing himself so much below *Jesus Christ.* Thus we ought likewise to entertain humble Sentiments of our selves, never seek our own Glory, but that of Christ alone; and to labour every one in his Calling, and to the utmost of his Power, to make Him known
to

to Men, and to bring them to Him. II. We see how *Jesus Christ*, as soon as ever He entred upon his Ministry, made choice of his Disciples; He did so, because He design'd to make use of them in Preaching the Gospel throughout the World, and to the end they might bear witness to his Life, his Doctrine, his Miracles, his Death and Resurrection. The great Joy that these first Apostles felt for having found the Messiah, and their earnestness to follow Him, teaches us, that our greatest Happiness is to know Christ, and inviolably to adhere to Him. What is related of *Nathaniel*, and the Testimony Christ gave of Him, by saying, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, ought to be well observed. By that we see our Lord had a perfect Knowledge of all Things, and particularly of the Heart of Man, and that the Qualities which He chiefly considers, and which He expects in his Disciples, is Purity of Heart, an upright Intention, a great Aversion to Hypocrisie, and a sincere Love to Truth and Holiness.

C H A P. II.

HERE is the Substance of this Chapter: I. Christ changes Water into Wine at the Marriage in *Canaan*. II. He goes to *Jerusalem*, and drives out of the Temple those that prophaned it. III. He works some Miracles in that City at the Feast of the Passover.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Miracle that Christ wrought, by changing Wine into Water, at the Marriage of *Cana*, has this remarkable Circumstance, that it was his first Miracle, and that

He began by that to manifest his divine Power and Calling in Presence of the blessed Virgin his Mother, of his Disciples, and several other Persons, which caused his Fame to be spread throughout *Galilee*, and his Disciples to believe on Him. II. We see that Christ being arriv'd at *Jerusalem*, drove from the Temple those who bought and sold there. He did the same Thing three Years after, and a little before his Death. This was a publick Token which He was pleased to give, at the very Beginning of his Ministry, of his Divine Authority, and of his great Zeal; which was likewise owned by the Apostles, by their applying to Him these Words: *The Zeal of thy House has eaten me up.* What we may learn from thence is, to be filled with great Zeal for the Glory of God, to oppose every thing that is contrary thereto, and to shew a Respect for the Places that are devoted to the Service of God, and in general, for all that belongs to Religion. It is to be observ'd, that the *Jews* required of Christ some Proofs of his Authority, whereupon He told them: *Destroy this Temple, and I will build it again in three Days.* By which He meant, that the strongest Proof He could give of himself was, that He would rise from the Dead upon the third Day; but He spoke in figurative and dark Terms, it not being proper as yet to speak more plainly concerning his Death and Resurrection. III. The last Thing *St. John* relates here is, that several People believed in *Jesus* when they saw the Miracles He did. But that *Jesus* did not commit himself unto them, because *He knew all Men*: — And knew what was in *Man*. We ought carefully to attend to this Place, where it is said, that Christ knows all Men, and all that passes in their Hearts; and particularly, that He does not look upon all those

those who call themselves Christians to be his true Disciples. Thus we must not pretend to be acceptable to Him, unless the Profession we make of Believing in Him be sincere, nor unless we shew the Truth of it by our Obedience.

C H A P. III. I,——21.

IN the first Part of this Chapter, St. *John* relates, I. The Discourse between *Jesus Christ* and *Nicodemus*; in which, under the Type of a second Birth, and of Water, He shews, that Men must be wholly renewed, and inwardly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, if they would become his Disciples, and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. II. Next He makes mention, after a figurative Manner, of his Death. He informs him of the Design of his Coming into the World, and shews what is the Cause of the Unbelief and Perdition of Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **L**ET us learn from the Discourse that Christ held with *Nicodemus*, that carnal Men cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and that, in order to be admitted there, we must become new Creatures, and entertain Thoughts and Inclinations that will lead us to the Knowledge of Truth, and to the Enquiry after spiritual Things. This may likewise teach us, that since 'tis by the means of the Spirit of God that we are to be thus regenerated, we ought to implore fervently and continually the Grace of that Holy Spirit, and to make a right Use of it when God shall grant it to us. II. Christ gives us here an Abstract of the Gospel, in saying, that: *God so loved the World,*

that He gave his only begotten Son, to the end, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have everlasting Life. These Words, and those which Christ adds, shew most plainly, that the Gift which God has made to Mankind of his Son, is the greatest Token He ever gave them of his Love; that Faith in Christ is the only Means of being saved; and if there be any who do not believe, but reject the Light of the Gospel, it only proceeds from their being addicted to Sin, and from a Heart depraved and corrupted by Passions. From whence we ought to consider, of how great Importance it is to divest our selves of our Passions, and to purifie our Hearts with a sincere Love of Truth and Virtue.

C H A P. III. 22,——36.

JOHN the Baptist having been informed by his Disciples, that a great Number of People follow'd Christ, shews great Joy thereat, and declares openly that Christ was infinitely more worthy than he, that he was the Son of God, and that none but such as believed in Him could be saved.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard the Testimony that John the Baptist gave of our Lord, by a publick Confession that Jesus was greater than he, and how great Satisfaction he conceiv'd when he was informed that the Glory of our Saviour began to spread it self. These are Arguments of the Humility and Zeal of that faithful Fore-runner of the Messiah; and 'tis thus likewise that we ought always to bear witness to the Truth, and to seek not our own Glory, but that of

of our Saviour, in such manner, that the Advancement of his Kingdom, and the Salvation of Men, should be the principal Object of our Wishes, and beget in us the greatest Joy. We learn further from this Discourse of *John* the Baptist, that Christ being the Son of God, and having received from his Father a Power without Bounds, it is only by Faith, and by a sincere Obedience to his Doctrine, that we can obtain Salvation ; and that those who disobey Him, continue in Condemnation and in Death. This is what is expressed in the last Verse of this Chapter, by these Words, which contain the Substance of the Christian Doctrine: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life ; but the Wrath of God abideth in him.*

C H A P. IV.

I. **C**H R I S T going from *Judea* to *Galilee*, and passing through *Samaria*, discourses with a *Samaritan* Woman, and makes himself known to her ; upon which she believed on Him, as well as several other *Samaritans*. II. Arriving in *Galilee*, He heals the Son of a Nobleman of that Country. For the better Understanding this Chapter, it must be observed, that the *Samaritans* were originally partly *Jews*, and partly *Gentiles* ; that they worshiped the true God in a Temple built upon the Mountain of *Gerizim*, but that they did not serve Him in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, nor after the manner which He required ; upon which Account, there was always Enmity between them and the *Jews*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Reflexion that is to be made here is, that Christ, by an effect of his Goodness and Wisdom, meeting with a *Samaritan* Woman near a Well, made use of that Occasion to instruct her, and to bring her to the Knowledge of the Truth, by speaking to her concerning Himself and his Doctrine under a Type of Water. The manner in which our Lord mention'd to her this spiritual Water, and the wholesome Effects which it produces, is a Lesson to us, that the Knowledge and Grace of *Jesus Christ* is the most precious Gift that God ever gave to Men, and what we ought to desire with the greatest Fervency. II. The second Instruction is, that the Grace of God and his Covenant, is no longer appropriated to one Nation, or to one peculiar Place, as was pretended both by the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; but that all Men without distinction may partake thereof; and that the true Worship which God requires of us is, that as *He is a Spirit, they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth*. III. We see that the Disciples of our Lord urging Him to take some Food, were answer'd by Him: *My Meat is to do the Will of Him that sent me*. And that they should dispose themselves to labour, as He did, in the Conversion of Sinners; which, to make them comprehend the better, He uses the Similitude of an approaching Harvest. Let us gather from thence, that there is nothing in which we ought to take greater Pleasure and Satisfaction, than to do the Will of God; and it is thus that all of us ought to employ our selves with the utmost Zeal. IV. The Conversion of the *Samaritan* Woman, and several of the Inhabitants

tants of the Town of *Sychar*, is an event which shewed, that the Messiah did not come for the sake of the *Jews* only ; but that other Nations likewise were about to be admitted into the Divine Covenant. This Conversion, and the Eagerness of the Woman to inform the Inhabitants of her Town of what had happened, and to bring them to Christ, is a Lesson also to us, that we should receive with readiness the Gospel when it is preached to us, and moreover, to contribute all that in us lies to bring over our Neighbour to the Faith, by our Exhortations, and by our good Examples. *Lastly*, St. *John* teaches us, that Christ being returned into *Galilee*, heals there the Son of a Nobleman by his Word only, and tho' the sick Man himself was absent. Thus our Lord thought fit to give new Examples of his Power and Goodness in that Country, to the end that He might make himself known to the *Jews*, and to induce them to believe in Him.

C H A P. V. 1,—14.

CH R I S T cures a Man that had been afflicted with the Palsie for the Space of Thirty eight Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE discover, I. In the Cure of the Paralytical Person, whose History St. *John* gives us here, the wonderful Power of our Lord, who, by his Word only, entirely cured a Man that had lost the Use of his Limbs for so many Years, which was as great a Miracle as that which was done at the Pool of *Bethesda* by the means of an Angel. II. We see that the Lord took Compassion on this Paralytical Man, by asking

asking him, whether he desired to be healed, and at the same time actually healing him after an unexpected manner. By that we may observe, that this charitable Saviour is always disposed to communicate his Goodness to Men, and to deliver them from their Miseries ; that He even prevents them, and offers his Favours to them ; but it likewise shews, that no Body is admitted to partake of them but those who desire them, and who, like the Paralytical Man, lay hold of those Offers which Christ so graciously makes them. III. We should carefully attend to that which Christ said to this sick Man : *Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* This is a Warning to those whom God has deliver'd from any Infirmary, or any other Misfortune, that they should shew their Gratitude to Him, and especially avoid, for the Time to come, falling into Sin, for fear of obliging God to punish them more severely, not only in this Life, but even in that to come.

C H A P. V. 15,—47.

THIS is a Discourse, by which Christ shews the *Jews* that they were in the wrong in being offended at his healing the Paralytical Man upon the Sabbath-Day, and at his assertion, that God was his Father. And here follows the Substance thereof. I. Our Lord acquainted the *Jews*, that He wrought his Miracles by the Power of God ; that they ought not to be surpriz'd at his attributing to himself so much Authority, and for calling God his Father ; that He would do greater Miracles thereafter ; and that He would raise the Dead ; that He would Judge the World ; that He would bestow Eternal Life upon such as believed

lieved in Him ; and condemn all those that should reject Him. II. Christ adds, that He did not desire to be believed upon his bare Word that He was sent by God ; that the *Jews* might satisfy themselves by the Testimony that *John* the Baptist bore Him, and which had great Weight with them ; by the Miracles He wrought, and by the Oracles of *Moses* and the Prophets. III. He complains of the Unbelief of the *Jews*, who would not have recourse to Him to obtain everlasting Life, and tells them, that this Unbelief proceeded from Hearts void of the Love of God, and full of Self-love, and of the Glory of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS whole Discourse, in which Christ proves to the *Jews*, by several Arguments, that He was sent from God, shews us, that our Faith was built upon solid Reasons, and upon convincing and incontestable Proofs ; to fortify our selves therefore in the Faith, we ought seriously to weigh these Proofs which Christ alleged to the *Jews*, and to add to them those which the *Jews* had not at that time, and which are drawn from the Resurrection of our Saviour ; from the Establishment of the Christian Religion ; and from the Testimony of the Apostles. Besides this general Observation, we may make the three following particular ones upon this Discourse of Christ. I. That God gave our Lord an unlimited Power, which, as He exerted formerly in doing Miracles, He will display yet more pompously when He shall come to raise the Dead, and to Judge all Men, both Righteous and Wicked. We ought therefore to revere this Power, to honour the Son of God, as we honour God his Father, and to obey

bey Him, to the end, that we may be raised one Day to Life Eternal, but not to Condemnation. II. Since Christ alledges the Testimony of the holy Scriptures, and of *Moses*; and He exhorts the *Jews* to search and examine them; it follows, that we ought often to read, and carefully to meditate upon the Writings of the Old Testament as well as those of the New, since 'tis the Way to obtain everlasting Life. III. What Christ said to the *Jews* about their Unbelief, and the Causes thereof, is a Lesson to us, that if there be any People that will not come to our Lord to obtain Life, and if there be any that perish, the reason is, that they have not the Love of God in them, and that their Hearts are possessed by their Passions. Above all, Christ declares that the Love of the World and his Glory, and the Desire to be approved and well spoken of by Men, is one of the greatest Impediments to Faith and Salvation.

C H A P. VI. 1, — 21.

THIS is a Relation of two Miracles of our Saviour. I. That of his Feeding five Thousand Persons with five Loaves and two Fishes. And, II. that of Calming a Tempest.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE miraculous Manner in which our Lord fed the People that followed Him, is so much the more an illustrious Proof of his supream Power, as there were several Thousands of Persons who were both Witnesses of this Miracle, and who might satisfy themselves of the Truth thereof, by eating of those Loaves and Fishes which Christ had multiplied. II. We may observe that those People were so affected with this Miracle, that they not only affirm

affirmed that Christ was the Prophet, and the Messiah whom the *Jews* expected, but they would likewise have declared Him King; for which reason, He withdrew to a solitary Place; being unwilling that any Sedition or Commotion should be rais'd for his sake. This Proceeding of the *Jews*, was an effect of the Opinion they had taken up, that the Messiah was to be a Temporal King; but the Retreat of Christ shewed, that his Kingdom was not of the Earth; which should teach us, not to seek our Happiness and our Glory in this World, and above all, to shun the Pomp and Splendour of the World, and to keep our selves always in great Humility. III. In the other Miracle that happen'd, when the Apostles were in danger of being Shipwrack'd, we may observe shining Marks of the Power of Christ, since He came to them walking upon the Water, and that by his Word only the Storm was asswaged. The Care which our Lord had of his Apostles, and the Love which He bore them, appears likewise in this Event, and we may from thence draw Motives of Trust and Confidence in the midst of all those Dangers and Necessities to which we may be exposed.

C H A P. VI. 22,—40.

I. **O**UR Lord and Saviour having miraculously fed the People with five Loaves and two Fishes, and observing their Eagerness in following Him, takes occasion from thence, to exhort them to seek for spiritual Food, and such as would make them live for ever, rather than for the Sustenance of a perishable Body. II. He tells them next, that He was that Food, and the Bread of Heaven, and that those

those who eat of that Bread should attain everlasting Life!

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E chief Instruction this Discourse of our Saviour furnishes us with is, to labour much more earnestly to procure that Food that causes Men to live for ever, rather than that which only serves to support a temporal and fading Life. And since our Lord has told us so plainly, that He himself is this heavenly Bread, and that this Food of the Soul is only to be found in Him, and in his Gospel, let us beseech Him to give us always of that Bread. Let us receive with Gratitude that Food which He offers us with so much Goodness in his Word; let us submit our selves to his Doctrine and divine Precepts, and embrace with Faith these so comfortable Promises which He makes us, that He will not reject those that come to Him, and the Assurances which He gives us, that: *This is the Will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last Day.*

C H A P. VI. 41,—72.

I. **O** U R Lord continues to discourse of spiritual Food, and explains what He had said, and what the Jews had not understood; namely, that He was the Bread which came down from Heaven. He says, that this Food was his Flesh and his Blood, which He would give for the Life of the World, by which He hinted at his own Death; but He expressed himself figuratively, and somewhat obscurely, because it was not yet seasonable for Him
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openly to declare that He should be put to Death. II. Some of his Disciples being offended at this Discourse, Christ tells them that his Word is to be understood in a spiritual Sense; but that did not hinder several among them from forsaking Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Discourse of our Saviour, had something of Obscurity in it when He spake it; we may have observ'd, that the *Jews* could not conceive how Christ was that Bread that descended from Heaven, and how it was necessary to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood, in order to obtain everlasting Life; but to us Christians, this ought to be very clear, forasmuch as we know that the Death of *Jesus Christ* is the true Food of the Soul, and the only Principle of spiritual Life and Immortality; that the Words of our Saviour are Spirit and Life; that is to say, they are to be understood after a spiritual manner; and that to eat the Flesh of Christ, and drink his Blood, means nothing else, as He himself explains it in this Chapter, but to come to Him, and to believe in Him. Only it is necessary that this Faith should be sincere, and attended with Love, Trust, and Obedience, and that it should unite us so closely to Christ, that nothing should be able to separate us from Him. The Question which our Lord put to his Apostles, whether they would likewise forsake Him, as divers of his Disciples had done, and the Answer St. Peter return'd Him, oblige us to consider, that Christ forces none into his Service; that the Obedience He requires, is free and voluntary; that however we ought never to leave Him, since He only has the Words of eternal

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Life,

Life; and that being the Son of the Living God, He is the sole Author of Salvation. The last Words of this Chapter, where it is said, that *Jesus* knew from the beginning that *Judas*, who was of the Number of the Twelve Apostles, would betray Him, teach us, that our Lord knows all those that call themselves his Disciples, and that He discerns them who don't believe in Him, from such as are faithful to Him; upon which, all of us ought to make the most serious Reflexions. An external Profession of Christianity is not sufficient, and there is nothing but a true Faith, and steady Obedience, that can secure our Heart before God, and make us accepted by Him, who sees the Hearts of all Men, and who will render to them all according to their Works.

C H A P. VII. 1,—30.

I. **S**T. J O H N relates here, a Journey that Christ made to *Jerusalem* on account of the Feast of Tabernacles. II. The different Judgments that Men passed upon Him. And, III. his Answer to the *Jews*, who found fault with Him for his having cured a Paralytical Person some Months before, at the Feast of the Passover, and upon a Sabbath-Day.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first Thing to be observed in this Chapter is, that our Lord refused to go publickly to *Jerusalem*, and in the Company of his Relations; He acted thus out of Prudence, that He might avoid all Pomp, and that He might not be exposed to the Rage of the *Jews*, who sought to put Him to Death. That which He said to his Relations: That *the World*, that

that is to say, the *Jews*, cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testifie of it, that the Works thereof are Evil; contains a perpetual and general Truth; namely, that worldly People love those that are like them, but hate those whose Lives and Speeches condemn their wicked Actions. II. We see here the various Judgments the People made upon Christ; but above all, we may observe the Blindness and Malice of the *Jews*, who, without minding the Proofs which our Lord gave of his Divine Mission, accused Him of breaking the Law of God, by healing a Paralytical Person on a Sabbath-Day, for which they would even have put Him to Death. This procedure of the *Jews* shews, that Prejudice and Passion may blind Men to such a Degree that nothing can undeceive them, and that they are even brought to condemn Actions that are altogether holy and praiseworthy. But it likewise appears from this History, that the *Jews* could do no harm to our Lord, tho' they design'd it, and that no Body durst lay Hands on Him. 'Tis thus that God can stop the Attempts of the Wicked, and protect those that serve Him faithfully. III. We ought to be affected at the Wisdom and Strength which appears in what Christ said to the *Jews*, to justify what He had done, and to convince them that his Doctrine was Heavenly and Divine; as also at the Moderation with which He answer'd them, when they accused Him of being possess'd with a Devil. In the last Place, we have here an Example of Patience and Meekness, to which we should endeavour to conform our selves. Among the several Instructions which this Discourse contains, the following Words require our particular Attention: *If any Man will do his Will, He shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of*

my self. Let us gather from thence this important Lesson, that the principal Disposition we ought to be in, to know the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, and to discover the Truth and Beauty thereof, is to have an upright Heart, and a sincere Desire to do the Will of God, as far as it is, and can be known to us.

C H A P. VII. 34,—53.

THE *Pharisees* being enrag'd because the People were affected at the Discourses and Miracles of our Lord, sent some Persons to seize upon Him; but He continued to speak with so much Authority and Plainness, and exhorted the People so pathetically, that several acknowledged Him to be a Prophet, and that some even believed He was the Messiah; so that those who were order'd to lay hold of Him, returned without daring to do it; at which the *Pharisees* were extreamly irritated.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Thing we have here to observe is, that the Speeches and Wonders which Christ wrought, produced very different Effects, forasmuch as the People were extreamly affected thereat, and filled with Admiration; whereas, on the contrary, the *Pharisees* were so provoked by them, that they would have caused our Lord to be apprehended. Thus we may see how differently the Word of God is received, some open their Eyes and their Hearts to the Truth, and grow better by it; others reject it, and proceed even to hate those who propose it, and to be exasperated against them. II. We may take notice in the Discourse of our Saviour, the Evidence, Meekness, and

and Authority with which He continues to apply himself to the *Jews*; and especially those Invitations, so full of Goodness, which He makes them, in saying, *If any one Thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* Whereby He offers them his Grace, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He was ready to pour upon them that should believe in Him. He likewise makes us the same Offers in the Gospel. 'Tis our business to receive them as we ought, and to embrace them with Zeal and Gratitude. III. We ought to reflect upon what St. *John* says, that those who were commanded to seize our Saviour, durst not do it, but told them who sent them, that *never Man spake like this Man.* By which we see, on one Hand, the Virtue and Efficacy of the Word of God; and on the other, that God renders the Designs of the Wicked vain and useless whenever He pleases. Finally, It is a remarkable thing, that the *Pharisees*, instead of Discovering, that in Opposing Christ they opposed God himself; and instead of being moved at seeing so many People bearing witness to our Lord, were more and more enrag'd against Him, and even against the People who spoke favourably of Him and his Doctrine. This is a Proof, that the most Knowing and most Considerable People, are often less disposed than the Mean and the Simple, to receive the Gospel; because they are possess'd by their Passions, and especially because they are filled with Pride, and a good Opinion of themselves, and that they don't endeavour sincerely, and in the Integrity of their Hearts, to be instructed, and to know the Truth.

C H A P. VIII. 1—29.

ST. *John* relates here, I. The History of the Woman taken in Adultery. II. A Discourse that Christ had with the *Jews*, in which He told them He was the Light of the World, and that they ought to believe what He told them of himself. III. He reproaches them of their Blindness and Unbelief, and speaks about his Departure from this World, and his Death ; but does it in figurative Terms, and such as they could not comprehend.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO understand the History of the Adulterous Woman, and to make a right Use of it, we must observe, I. That the Design of the *Pharisees* in bringing this Woman to Christ, was to ensnare Him ; for if He had said that she ought not to be put to Death, they would have charged Him with breaking the Law of God ; and if He had passed Sentence of Condemnation on her, they would have accused Him to the Governour for violating the Rites of the supream Magistrate. II. If Christ did not condemn that Woman, it was not because her Crime was not great, and worthy of Death, but the Reason why He acted in that manner was, that it did not belong to Him to exercise the Office of a Magistrate or a Judge, and to shew, that He sought nothing but the Salvation of Sinners. III. It is particularly to be observed, that our Lord said to that Woman: *Go thy ways, and sin no more* ; which shews, that He was far from excusing her Crime ; and which may also teach us, that God does not pardon Sinners but upon condition that they will not relapse into their

their Sins. In our Saviour's Discourse with the *Jews*, we may consider, I. These remarkable Expressions of our Lord: *I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me, shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.* These Words ought to be continually meditated by us Christians, and we ought to be excited by them always to follow Christ, to imitate Him, and to walk in the Way which He has chalked out for us by his Doctrine, and by his Example, and which will certainly lead us to Life and Immortality. II. What Christ said to the *Jews* with so much Clearness, and so much Meekness, to extricate them from those Prejudices they labour'd under in Opposition to Him, and to engage them to believe that He spake to them as from God, should yet more strongly convince us, that He is the Son of God, and that his Doctrine proceeds from Heaven; God having given authentick Testimonies thereof, not only by the Miracles which our Saviour wrought, but likewise by what followed his Death, his Resurrection, and his Exaltation to heavenly Glory. *Lastly*, We have seen that the *Jews* did not improve the Instructions of our Lord, that they continued still in their Unbelief, and that Christ therefore told them that they should die in their Sins. Thus Men, who are enslaved to the World, and to their Passions, resist the Evidence and Force of Truth when it is proposed to them; and by refusing to believe in *Jesus*, and to obey Him, they remain in their Sins, and consequently in Condemnation and in Death.

C H A P. VIII. 30,—59.

I. **C**H R I S T exhorts those among the *Jews*, who had believed in Him, to persevere in his Doctrine, and promises them true Liberty. II. He tells the unbelieving *Jews* they were not the Children of *Abraham*, since they did not imitate Him in his Faith, and reproaches them of their Unbelief, wherewith they were so provoked, as to say very harsh Things to Him, and to attempt to stone Him; but He escaped their Rage, and retreated from them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LE T us learn from hence, I. That when we have the Happiness of knowing Christ, and of believing in Him, we ought constantly to persevere in the Truth, and adhere to it more and more; which if we do, we shall be really his Disciples, and enjoy that true Liberty of the Children of God, which consists, as our Lord has said, in being deliver'd from the Bondage of Sin. II. What He told the *Jews*, that they were not the Children of God, nor of *Abraham*, since they did not imitate the Faith of that Patriarch, but that they were rather the Children of the Devil, since they did his Works, has great Weight in it. We may learn from thence, that the surest Token whereby to discover the Children of God is, that they do his Will, and that they love those whom God loves; but those that set themselves against the Truth, and against such as declare it, are the Children and Imitators of the Devil, who is a Liar, Murderer, and Enemy of the Truth. We likewise see in this Discourse of our Lord, how happy those are who receive his Doctrine,
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and submit thereto, since He declares that they are not under the Power of Death. III. We may observe next, that tho' Christ spoke to the *Jews* with so much plainness and strength, they, instead of benefitting by his Instructions, were exasperated thereat, and proceeded to such a degree of Rage, as to call Him a *Samaritan*, and a Man possess'd by the Devil. This is an Instance of the most deplorable Blindness, and the blackest Malice, and shews us how dangerous it is to abandon our selves to our Passions, and to fall into Unbelief. *Lastly*, We have in this Chapter, a remarkable Proof of the Glory and Divinity of Christ, by his declaring that he was before *Abraham*, which ought to convince us so much the more of the Divinity of the Gospel, and our Obligation to obey Christ, as He who is our God and our Saviour, to whom Honour, Glory, and Obedience, ought to be render'd by all Men for ever.

C H A P. IX.

THIS Chapter contains the History of the Cure of a Man that was born Blind.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE History we have now read is very remarkable; besides the Proofs of the Goodness and Power of Christ, which appear by his healing the Man that was born Blind, as well as in all the other Miracles of our Lord, we see here three Things well worthy our Attention. I. The Steps which the *Pharisees* made, and the Pains they took to deny this Miracle: What they said for that purpose to the Father and Mother of the blind Man, and afterwards to the blind Man himself, the Slanders they raised against *Jesus Christ*; And, *Lastly*, when they could oppose nothing against the Certainty

of the Miracle, and being unable to answer the Arguments of the Man, they broke out into injurious Language against him, and excommunicated him. In all this their Procedure we may discover Marks of the most violent Passion, and of the most obstinate Malice. The Wicked resist every thing, they shut their Eyes, and are more and more hardened, even by those Things which should affect and convert them. II. We may observe in the Discourse of the blind Man, the Sincerity and Strength with which he spoke to the *Pharisees*, and confounded them, by maintaining that he had been well cured; and since Christ had restored his Sight to him, He could not be a wicked Man and a Deceiver, as they pretended. In Reading this Relation, we see the Power of Truth, and that the most simple Persons do often judge better of Things, than those who are thought to have more Sense and Knowledge, and that God makes use of such mean and ignorant People, to confound the wise Men of this World. III. We see that Christ, knowing how this Man had been excommunicated by the *Pharisees*, for speaking the Truth in their Presence, revealed himself to him, telling him that He was the Son of God, and assuring him that those who passed for the most Learned, such as the *Pharisees*, should continue in their Blindness, whilst such as were look'd upon as ignorant, but who were humble and sincere, should benefit by his Doctrine. Our Lord, as we see, receives with Goodness those that love the Truth, and that are persecuted by the World, and He grants them new Gifts, and new Graces, whilst those who are conceited of themselves, and obstinately reject the Truth when it is offer'd to them, remain in their Unbelief, and perish in their Darkness.

C H A P. X. 1,—21.

THIS is a Discourse which our Lord held with the *Jews*, after He had cured the Man that was born Blind, in which He compares himself to a good Shepherd. He speaks likewise of false Shepherds, and of Hirelings, by which Characters He describes Deceivers and false Teachers. He says, that such People had nothing else in View but their own Interest, and only sought to gratifie their own Pride and Covetousness; whereas He came not into the World but for the Welfare and Health of his Sheep, and that He was willing even to lay down his Life for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Discourse of Christ is much plainer to us than it was to the *Jews*, since we know perfectly that our Lord is the true Shepherd, who gave his Life for the Sheep, that is to say, for all such as should believe in Him; and that He came to gather them all together in his Church. Upon which we must acknowledge, I. This infinite Love of Christ, our good Shepherd, who so tenderly loved his Sheep, and who suffer'd Death, to obtain Life and Salvation for them. II. How great our Happiness is, to be of the Number of those Sheep which He has redeemed by his Blood, and brought into his Fold, and for which He has purchased everlasting Life. And, finally, what Cause we have to love this charitable Shepherd, who has thus loved us, to hear his Voice, and to live under his Government in the Obedience we owe Him, and in a steady Expectation of the Glory and Happiness He has

has promised us, and which He reserves for us in his Kingdom.

C H A P. X. 22,—42.

THIS is the Sum of what we are about to read: I. Christ being at *Jerusalem*, at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, and the *Jews* enquiring of Him, whether He were the Messiah, He tells them, that his Miracles shewed sufficiently what He was; that if they did not know Him, it proceeded from their Hardness; but that his own Sheep knew Him; that He would give everlasting Life to all them that should believe in Him; and that God would never suffer them to perish, since that He and God his Father were one. II. The *Jews* thereupon were going to stone Him, because He took upon Him the Title of the Son of God; but our Lord not being willing to speak openly to them concerning his Divinity, contented Himself with telling them, that since the Scripture calls Princes and Magistrates Gods, He might very well assume the Name of the Son of God without Blasphemy, for as much as God had sent Him into the World, and that his Miracles plainly proved that He was so. After which our Saviour retreated to *Jerusalem*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may here make four Observations: I. The first relates to the strange Blindness and Malice of the *Jews*, who, after so many Miracles which Christ had wrought, and so many Proofs that shewed He was sent from God, asked him whether He was the Messiah, and then would have stoned Him for a Blas-

Blasphemer. Our Lord himself observes, that this Unbelief of the *Jews* proceeded from their not loving the Truth, and from their want of a sincere Desire to know it. If therefore Men do not profit by the Doctrine of *Christ Jesus*, and that in the midst of Light they be still in Ignorance and Error, it proceeds from the want of Docility, and love for Truth and for Virtue.

II. The second Observation is, that the Token and Character of our Saviour's Sheep, that is to say, of his true Disciples, is to hearken to the Voice of their divine Shepherd, to follow Him, and to obey Him. III. We see in this Discourse of our Lord, that the Happiness and Salvation of true Believers is certain, since He declares, *that He knows them, that He gives unto them Eternal Life, that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his Hand.* These Words should fill all those that love the Lord *Jesus* with great Comfort and strong Confidence, and confirm them more and more in such Love. IV. Since our Lord says in this Chapter, that He could justly take upon himself the Title of God, we ought seriously to reflect on the infinite Dignity of his Person, and the Excellence of his Office, and be thereby excited to render Him the Honour, Adoration, and Obedience that are due to Him, as being our God and our Saviour blessed for evermore.

C H A P. XI.

THIS Chapter contains the History of the Resurrection of *Lazarus*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Consideration to be made upon this History, which is one of the most remarkable of the whole Gospel is, that though our Lord had a great Kindness for *Lazarus*, yet He did not go *Bethany* till after he was dead, to the end that the Miracle He should work, by restoring him to Life, might be much more Illustrious than that of curing his Distemper. Those whom God loves, may be exposed to divers Evils; He even delays to come to their Assistance, but He uses them thus, to the end that his Power and Love may appear more plainly in their Deliverance. II. We may observe in what the Sisters of *Lazarus* said to our Saviour, their Piety, Love, and adherence to Christ, and the great Opinion they had of his Power. Especially we may see thereby, that they were fully persuaded their Brother would rise at the last Day. We have yet much greater Reason than those two holy Women to love our Lord, to put our whole Trust in Him, to expect all Things from his Power, and particularly, to believe that the Dead must rise again. III. The Goodness with which Christ spake to the Sisters of *Lazarus*, to comfort them, and to prepare them for the Miracle which He design'd to do; the Concern He shewed, and the Tears He shed when He saw *Lazarus* in the Tomb, are very plain Proofs, how much He loved these two Women and their Brother, and how charitable He was, and full of Compassion. This is an Example which ought to engage us to be affected with the Misfortunes of other Men, and to comfort the Miserable with all our Might. But what is chiefly to be observed here is, that our Lord restored Life to *Lazarus*, after
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ter he had been four Days in the Grave. This great Miracle, which Christ wrought but few Days before his Death, and in the Presence of a great Number of the *Jews*, several of whom believed in Him, is one of the most illustrious Proofs that He gave, during his whole Life, that He was the Son of God. This Miracle serves especially to confirm the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Truth of what our Lord says in this Chapter: *I am the Resurrection and the Life: He that believeth in me, though he were Dead, yet shall he live.* IV. St. John acquaints us, that the *Pharisees*, instead of being convinced by so illustrious a Miracle, were so enraged to see the People declare for Christ, that they form'd a Design of putting Him to Death, which made Him retire to a solitary Place till the Feast of the Passover. By this we may still see, that such as abandon themselves to their Passions, are provoked by that which ought to soften and prevail upon them, and that they always grow worse and worse. But it ought likewise to be consider'd, that God permitted the *Jews* to take this Resolution, to the end that, contrary to their Design, our Lord might suffer Death, not only for the *Jewish* Nation, but also to collect into one Body all the Children of God.

C H A P. XII. 1,—19.

THIS Part of the Twelfth Chapter contains three Things. I. *Mary* washes our Saviour's Feet. II. Several People come from *Bethany*, to see Christ, and *Lazarus* that was raised. III. Our Lord makes his Royal Entry into *Jerusalem*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard, I. How *Mary* anointed the Feet of Christ; what Judgment *Judas* passed upon this Action, and what was said by our Lord in Defence of it. As *Mary* anointed Him, to testifie her Respect and Love for Him, we ought likewise to shew Him our Love and our Zeal, by all the Means that are in our Power. The Murmuring of *Judas*, who, being a Thief, and a covetous Man, complain'd that the Value of that Ointment was not given to the Poor, proves very clearly, that the Heart of this false Disciple was entirely corrupted. We likewise see by this Instance, what Power Covetousness has over those whom it possesses, and how wicked Men do sometimes hide their Passions under the Veil of Religion and Piety. And what Christ said on the behalf of *Mary* shews, that He vouchsafes to accept whatever is done for his Honour, and particularly all Acts of Charity. II. The Arrival of those Persons that came to *Bethany*, to see *Lazarus*, whom our Lord had raised, and the Resolution taken by the Priests to put *Lazarus* to Death as well as Christ, is an argument of the Truth of this Miracle. It likewise shews, that the Wickedness of the chief among the *Jews* were at the highest Pitch, and that there was no more good to be hoped of them. III. The Royal Entry of Christ into *Jerusalem*, tended to teach the *Jews*, that He was the Messiah promised by the Prophets, but that He was a spiritual and heavenly King, and at the same time full of Meekness and Goodness. And the Acclamations of the People, who attended Him on this Occasion, praising God, and particularly, bearing Witness that Christ had called *Lazarus*

Lazarus from the Grave, and restored him to Life, ought to incite us to praise and adore this great Redeemer, at the Sight of so many wonderful Things He has done, and so many Tokens He has given us of his Glory and his Love, and to say, *Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

C H A P. XII. 20,—50.

ST. *John* relates four Things here: I. What Christ said when certain Strangers, that were come to *Jerusalem*, on account of the Feast of the Passover, desired to see Him. II. That God caused a Voice at that time to be heard from Heaven, and that upon the same Occasion our Lord discours'd concerning his Death, and the Establishment of his Kingdom, but that the *Jews* did not understand his Words. III. St. *John* observes, that though our Lord had wrought so many Miracles, the *Jews* did not believe in Him, and that this their Unbelief had been foretold by the Prophet *Isaiah*. IV. And, *Lastly*, the Evangelist relates some Exhortations which Christ made to the *Jews* before his Death, in which He shews, what would happen to those that should receive his Doctrine, and to those that should reject it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Meaning of what our Saviour said, when the Strangers desired to see Him, was, that He would quickly manifest Himself to all Men; but that He was to die first; and that even all those who had a mind to follow Him, ought to prepare themselves for Sufferings and Death; but that He would exalt those that should believe in Him, and serve Him,

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Him, to the same Glory to which He was about to be exalted. The *Jews* did not well comprehend this Discourse; but it is by no means obscure to us. II. We have seen how God answer'd *Jesus Christ* at that time by a Voice which was heard from Heaven. This Prodigy was to convince the *Jews*, that Christ was sent from God; whereupon our Lord declared, that the Kingdom of Satan was going to be destroy'd, that He should soon draw all Men to Him, and that this would be one of the Fruits of his Death. The Event has fully verified this Prediction of Christ, which proves incontestably the Divinity of his Doctrine. III. We have seen the Reflexions which St. *John* makes in this Chapter upon the Unbelief of the *Jews*, some of whom did not believe in Christ, and others durst not own that they took Him for the Messiah, because they were afraid of the *Pharisees*, and because they loved the Praise of Men more than that of God. 'Tis thus when the Gospel is preached to Men, that some harden themselves, and reject it, and that others, who are in some manner affected with its Excellency, dare not make an open Profession of Truth and Holiness, being with-holden by Fear, by an unseasonable Shame, or by other Passions. IV. We ought carefully to attend to what Christ said to the *Jews* towards the end of his Life, and at the Time when they were about to be deprived of his Presence, namely, that He was come to enlighten them, and to lead them to Life; that they should walk in the Light, before the Darkness overtook them; and that those who would not hear his Word, should be judged by that same Word which they rejected. Let us make a better Use than the *Jews* did, of this divine Light, which enlightens us,

us, lest the Darkneſs overtakes us too, and
leſt the Goſpel, which is preached to us, become
one Day the Cauſe of our Condemnation.

C H A P. XIII. 1,—17.

CH R I S T waſhes his Apoſtles Feet;
and exhorts them to Humility and
Charity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WH E N the Son of God waſhed the Feet
of his Apoſtles, a little before his Death,
the Deſign of that Action, ſo extraordinary,
and ſo ſurprizing, was to ſhew how much He
loved them, to give them an example of Hu-
mility, and to teach them, that they ought to
love reciprocally, to conſider all Men as their
Equals, and to baniſh from their Minds all
Thoughts of a temporal Kingdom and worldly
Glory. We ought ſeriouſly to meditate upon
this Inſtance of Humility and Charity,
which is of ſo great an Efficacy to render us
truly Humble, and to incite us to love one ano-
ther ſincerely. Let us for this purpoſe remem-
ber what our Saviour ſays himſelf, that if He
who is the Maſter and Lord has ſo greatly lov-
ed us, and has ſo much humbled himſelf, much
more ought we to entertain the ſame Sentiments
one for another. This is the Uſe we ought to
make of what has been read, as our Lord ex-
horts us by theſe Words: *I have given you an
Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to
you.*

C H A P. XIII. 18,—38.

I. **O**UR Lord declares that *Judas* would deliver Him to the *Jews*. II. He discourses with his Disciples about his Decease, and exhorts them to love one another. III. He foretels that *Peter* would deny Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may consider here, I. That our Lord thought fit to declare, in the Presence of his Apostles, that one of them would deliver Him to the *Jews*, to the end, that when *Judas* should betray Him, they might be convinced that it was to happen so, for the Accomplishment of the Designs of Providence. Howbeit, Christ did not name *Judas*, nor discover him to all the Apostles, because they should not attempt to hinder his Intentions. From thence it appears plainly, that our Saviour was not ignorant of any thing that was to befall Him, that He knew the Purposes of Men, and the most secret Thoughts of their Hearts, and consequently, that He entirely knows all such as love Him, and believe sincerely in Him, as also all false Christians and Hypocrites. What He said to *Judas* shews likewise that God warns Sinners, but when they are harden'd, and will not amend by his Warnings, He leaves them to themselves. II. It is next to be observed, that Christ being about to leave his Disciples, recommended to them above all Things to love one another, which is the great Commandment that our blessed Redeemer has left, and of which He has given us an Example, by dying for us, and has most expressly declared, that this should be the Token by which his true Disciples would be

be distinguished. Our principal Duty therefore is, heartily to love each other, and to live in Peace and Concord, without which it does not belong to us to bear the glorious Name of Christians. III. The Prediction Christ made, that *Peter* would deny Him, is a fresh Proof, that nothing is hid to our Lord, and that He knows us better than we know our selves ; and when we shall have observed, that this Apostle answer'd Christ with so much Assurance, and nevertheless a very short Time after, fell into that Sin, of which He thought himself incapable, it should teach us to distrust our selves, to be upon the Guard against our own Weakness, and to improve the Warnings which our Lord gives us, and the Means He offers us, not to be overcome by Temptations.

C H A P. XIV.

THIS Chapter, and the two following, contain the Discourse that Christ had with his Disciples the Evening before his Death. His Design in this Discourse, was to comfort them, to strengthen their Faith, and to fill them with Courage and Zeal, to the end, they might not be offended at his Death ; and that afterwards they might be in a Condition to preach the Gospel, without fearing the Hatred of the World.

In this Fourteenth Chapter, I. Christ makes mention to the Apostles of the Glory to which He was about to be exalted, and to which He would exalt them one Day. II. He tells them, that they ought to be convinced by his Miracles that God had sent Him, and that they themselves should do as great Miracles as his, and He exhorts them to keep his Commandments. III. He promises to send them the Holy Ghost,

assures them they should see Him quickly again, and talks to them of the Happiness of those that shall persevere in his Love, and observe his Word. IV. He gives them his Blessing, and his Peace, and exhorts them to rejoice at his Departure. This Discourse being finished, He leaves *Jerusalem*, and goes with his Apostles towards the Mount of *Olives*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may consider in general upon this Chapter, the great Love Christ had for his Disciples, and which he bears to all those that love Him, and believe in Him. These are the Duties to which this Discourse of our Lord engages us: I. To Meditate continually upon the Glory where He has been exalted in the Heavens, and whereto He declares that He will likewise receive us; to aspire to the same Glory, by following the Way that leads to it; and since He himself is that Way, to adhere inviolably to Him. II. The second Duty is, ardently to love our Saviour, and to shew the Sincerity of our Love by keeping his Commandments. III. The third is, to implore by our Prayers the Assistance and Conduct of the Holy Ghost; remembering what Christ said, that the World cannot know nor receive that Holy Spirit, and that therefore, if we desired to obtain it, we must purifie our Hearts from the Love of the World. IV. We should consider, that as our Lord promised his Disciples to return to them after his Resurrection, so He will come to us at the last Day, that then his Elect shall be filled with Comfort and Joy, and that, in Expectation of this glorious Coming, our chief Care ought to be, to persevere in his Love, and to obey his Commandments. The last

Part

Part of this Chapter teaches us, that Christ communicates and unites Himself in the most intimate and wholesome Manner to all those that love Him, and keep his Word; that He heaps his Favours upon them, and grants them his Blessing and his Peace. A due Reflexion upon all these precious Advantages ought to inflame us with Love for this charitable Redeemer, and convince us, that all our Happiness consists in being Faithful to Him, in Loving Him, and living in his Communion.

C H A P. XV.

OUR Lord does four things in this Chapter. I. He represents, by the Comparison of the Vine and the Branches, the Union between Him and his Disciples. II. He exhorts them to persevere in the same Union, and in his Love, to keep his Commandments, and particularly to love one another. III. He tells them, He had chosen them to preach the Gospel throughout all the Earth, with wonderful Success. IV. He warns them that they should be exposed to Persecution and the hatred of the World; but for their Encouragement, He represents to them, that He had born the same Hatred, and promises them the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, which He would send after He left them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE following Reflections may be made upon the four Parts of this Chapter. I. The First, which contains the Vine and the Branches, denotes how strict is the Union which the Faithful have with Jesus Christ, that all our Happiness depends upon this Union, that we must partake of the Spirit and Life of

of Christ, to bring forth those Fruits that tend to the Glory of God, and are answerable to the advantage of being his Disciples; and that such as are not united to Him by Faith, and that bear no Fruit, shall be cut off and cast into the Fire like withered Branches. II. The Second Part teaches us, that our great and principal Duty is, to remain in the love of our Saviour, to keep his Commandments, and to love each other, continually setting before our selves, for this Purpose, the Example of his great Love to us, which has engaged Him to lay down his Life for us. III. What Christ says to his Apostles, that He had chosen them to establish his Kingdom throughout all the World, is a very clear proof of the Divinity of the Gospel, since the Preaching of the Apostles has been attended with the Conversion of so many Nations; but we ought likewise to consider, that our Lord has chosen and called us all, to the end that we may bear the Fruits of Holiness, and that each of us may labour with all our Might to promote his Knowledge and his Kingdom. IV. The last Part of this Chapter instructs us in two Things: The one is, that the World usually hates those that love Christ, and that lead a godly Life; but we must not think that strange, since our Lord Himself has likewise been exposed to the same hatred of the World. The other, that after that Christ has spoken, and the Gospel been preached to Men, those who continue in Infidelity and in Corruption are without excuse, since they reject the Testimony of the Son of God, of the holy Spirit, and of the Apostles, and wilfully shut their Eyes against the Truth.

C H A P. XVI.

I. **C**H R I S T continues to warn the Apostles, that they ought to prepare themselves to be persecuted, and even to suffer Death. II. To comfort them for the Sorrow which his Departure occasioned them, he promises them the Holy Ghost, and tells them that that holy Spirit would condemn the unbelieving World, and enable them more perfectly to know the Truths which Christ had taught them, and to declare them to Mankind. III. He adds, that He was about to leave them for a little Time, but that they would soon see Him again, when He should rise from the Dead; that then they would be filled with Joy; that He would bestow on them new favours, and make 'em to obtain of God the most precious Gifts. IV. We see at the end of this Chapter, that this Discourse of Christ served to comfort the Apostles, and to strengthen their Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LE T us learn from hence; I. That as the Apostles were to be exposed to great Persecutions, so likewise true Believers must expect to feel the effects of the hatred of those who know not or love not the Lord Jesus. II. That it was necessary for our Happiness that Christ should leave the World, to the end that He might enter into his Glory, and send us the Holy Ghost. III. What Christ says of that Spirit, that *when He is come, He will reprove the World of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment*, signifies, that the coming of the Holy Ghost and the Preaching of the Apostles would serve to convict the Jews of a wilful and inexcusable

cusable Unbelief, to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, and to destroy the Kingdom of the Devil. This is what has actually happened, and whereby we plainly see, that the Doctrine of our Lord proceeds from God. IV. The excellent Promises which Christ made the Apostles, of filling them abundantly with the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, have likewise been accomplished, and the Effects thereof have appeared, by the wonderful Fruits of their Preaching. V. We may observe, that the Apostles did not understand what our Saviour meant, when He told them, that in a little while they should not see Him, and again, in a little while they should see Him, and that He was going to his Father, and that then they should be entirely comforted, and that these Words were perfectly explained by his Resurrection, by his Ascension, and by the glorious Consequences thereof. These Promises, which confirm the Faith of the Apostles, ought also to strengthen ours, and induce us to believe, that although Jesus Christ be at present Absent from us, He will not be so always; that if we persevere in his Love, He will make us obtain from God the most wholesome Favours; and that as He returned to his Apostles after his Resurrection, He will likewise return to us at his second and last Coming, to bring us into the Glory of his Kingdom. Let us beseech Him to shew us all this Mercy. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVII.

THIS contains the Prayer which Christ offer'd to God his Father before He suffer'd Death, and it consists of three Articles: I. He prays for Himself, and desires to be received into heavenly Glory, to the end that God himself may be Glorified thereby. II. He prays
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for the Apostles, whom He was about to leave, and begs of his Father to Protect them and to Sanctify them, to the end that they may persevere in the Faith, and be enabled to preach the Gospel throughout the World, without fearing Persecutions. III. He prays for all those that should believe in Him, and that should receive the preaching of the Apostles; and He desires of God, that as well the Apostles as all the Faithful may be always united to Him, and among one another, by Faith and by Charity, and that they might also be admitted to that Glory, into which He was about to enter, and to remain for ever with Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this excellent Prayer which our Lord made, when He was just going to offer Himself as a Sacrifice upon the Cross, we may observe, I. His great Zeal for the Glory of God, and the glorious Reward He expected after his Sufferings. By this Example of our Saviour, we ought to be animated with the same Zeal, and to glorifie God upon Earth as much as we are capable of doing it; to the End that we may be admitted into that Glory which He has prepared for his Elect, before the Foundation of the World. II. We see in this Prayer the great Love that Christ bore to his Disciples, and with how much Warmth and Tenderness He recommended them to the Protection of God his Father before He left them. The Event made appear that the Prayers of our Lord were heard, since, excepting Judas, whose Infidelity He had foretold, all the Apostles persevered in the Truth which they had embraced, and that the Zeal they exerted had so wonderful a Success in the Conversion of them. III. But what

what we ought above all to observe here, and what chiefly concerns us is, that our Lord did not only Pray for the Apostles, but for all such as should believe in Him, and that should receive their Preaching. We may see thereby how dear the Faithful are to Christ, the care He takes of them, and the desire He has to render them Partakers of that Glory which He now enjoys; This ought to fill all those who truly Love the Lord Jesus with Joy and Confidence. But it must be carefully observed, that Christ only Prays thus for the truly Faithful, and that He Himself declares, that he does not Pray for worldly People, and for Unbelievers. If therefore we desire to be of the number of those for whom Christ makes this Prayer, and for whom he interceeds in Heaven, we must separate our selves from the World, we must be joyned to Christ by a true Faith, and to our Neighbours by a sincere Love, and to persevere in the Communion of God our Father, and of Jesus Christ our Saviour, to the end of our Lives. The Lord grant us this Grace!

C H A P. XVIII.

I. **C**H RIST is taken in the Garden. II. He is afterwards carried before the Council of the Jews. III. And next before *Pilate*, who refused at first to Condemn him. IV. We find here likewise St. *Peter's* Denial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter there are four Principal things to be considered. I. That when our Lord was delivered to the Jews by *Judas*, He caused those that came to apprehend Him to fall down to the Earth by one Word only. This was to make
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make his Enemies sensible of his Power, to hinder them from doing any Hurt to his Apostles, and to shew them that He could, if He had intended it, escape Death. II. The Second thing relates to the Behaviour of St. *Peter*, who drew his Sword in the Defence of his Master, and a little while after denied Him. This is a remarkable Instance of inconsiderate Zeal, and at the same time, of a great Weakness. It likewise furnishes us with two Instructions; one is, that if Christ blamed what this Apostle did, upon an Occasion that seemed lawful, it being to resist those that would unjustly have taken away his Master's Life; all Actions of Violence and Revenge are unlawful, and there is nothing that can authorize them. The other is, that those who abound in Zeal and good designs are capable of making great falls, when they presume too much of themselves, and are not upon the Guard against their own Weakness, and against Temptations, by the help of Watching and Prayer. III. In the manner in which they proceeded against our Lord, when He was brought before the Council of the Jews, it plainly appears, that He was innocent, and that the Jews only sought for a Pretence to condemn Him; but it is to be observed, that our Lord submitted to their Judgment though 'twas Unjust, and to the Outrages they did Him, exerting on that Occasion wonderful Patience and Meekness. This is a noble Lesson to us of Patience and Resignation, and we ought to conform ourselves to it. IV. It is to be observed in the last Place, that when Jesus was set before *Pilate*, that Governour would not condemn Him at first; and that having asked our Lord, whether He was the King of the Jews, He answered, He was so, but that his Kingdom was not of this World. These Circumstances serve to shew the

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the Innocence of Christ; and the Confession He made in the Presence of *Pilate*, teaches us, that we must always make a free Confession of our Truth, tho' we were sure thereby to draw upon our selves the Hatred of the World, imitating therein the Example of our Saviour, who, as *St. Paul* takes notice, *before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. though the same was to be the Cause both of his Condemnation and Death.

C H A P. XIX. 1,—16.

PILATE caused our Lord to be Scourged, and makes the Soldiers treat Him with Indignity and Contempt, thinking thereby to pacifie the Priests and chief Jews. He declares to them he found Him innocent, and endeavours to save his Life; but they continuing to require his Death, he consents at last that He should be Crucified.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the History of the Condemnation of Christ, we are to consider the Behaviour of *Pilate*, that of the Jews, and that of our Lord. I. In the Behaviour of *Pilate*, we see the Character of an unjust Judge; since that Governor believing Christ to be Innocent, caused Him first to be Scourged, and next treated with great Contempt, and at last condemned Him to be Crucified, though he had for a while resisted the Sollicitations of the Jews. 'Twas thus that *Pilate*, after having already committed one unjust Action, by Scourging our Saviour, in order to pacifie the Jews, engaged himself in the guilt of a much more crying one, by condemning Him to be put to Death. When Men have

have once begun to do a wicked Deed, they always go farther and farther; one Sin leads them on to another and greater, and after some short and faint Resistance they proceed to the highest kinds of Crimes. All this shews how dangerous it is to act against Light, and the Conviction of our Conscience, to shew a Complaisance for the Wicked in evil Things, and to seek for Evasions and Expedients when we are to do our Duty, and to resist Temptation. II. The Behaviour of the *Jews*, who could not be appeased either by the Remonstrances of *Pilate*, or by what Christ had suffer'd, and who continued to require that He should be Crucified, shews their Rage and Injustice, and is a Proof that when Men abandon themselves to their Passions, and when they have once taken their side, be it never so bad, they will hear nothing more, but engage themselves deeper and deeper into it, till they arrive at the End of their Designs. III. The Behaviour of Christ, the great Patience, Moderation, and Meekness, with which He submitted to all the cruel and unrighteous Treatment of *Pilate* and the *Jews*, ought to make a strong Impression upon us. This is a Token of his great Love, and an Example that has much Weight in it, to render us patient, meek, moderate, and submissive to the Will of God, under all the Evils that may befall us, and even tho' we should suffer by an effect of the Malice and Wickedness of Men.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIX. 17,—42.

ST. *John* gives us here an Account of the Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Passion and Death of our Saviour Christ, of which we have heard the History, ought to be consider'd and meditated in three principal Views. I. As a Sacrifice which He offer'd to God for the Expiation of our Sins, for our Deliverance from Death, and for procuring us a Right to everlasting Life. II. As an Engagement to love this charitable Redeemer, who has so loved us, and to renounce Sin, which He came to destroy by his Death. III. As an example of Patience and Humiliation, which we ought continually to set before our Eyes for a Pattern. Besides these general Considerations, we may make the four following particular Reflexions upon the Circumstances of this History. I. That the Writing which was put upon the Cross in three Languages, made known to all the World the Cause of Christ's Condemnation, and consequently of his Innocence. II. That the several Circumstances of his Passion, and of his Death; such as the Dividing his Garments, his Thirsting, his Bones not being broken, and the Piercing his Side, had been foretold by the Oracles of the Old Testament. For which reason, the *Jews* ought to have observed, by all that then happen'd, that *Jesus* was the Messiah promised by the Prophets, and 'tis what we ought to be fully persuaded of, by the wonderful Agreement between the Predictions of the Old Testament, and

and the Accomplishment thereof under the New, in the Person of our Saviour. III. What Christ said upon the Cross, to recommend the blessed Virgin to St. *John*, shews the Tenderneſs and Care our Lord took of his Mother, and at the ſame time, his Love to that Apoſtle. IV. In the Relation of the Burial of our Saviour, we ſee the Zeal of *Joſeph*, of *Nicodemus*, and ſome other pious Perſons, who, upon this Occaſion, gave publick Tokens of their Adherence to Chriſt. The Circumſtances of this Burial ſerve alſo to prove the Truth of his Death and Reſurrection. *Laſtly*, When we reflect upon the Burial of our Lord, it ſhould teach us not to fear either the Grave or Death, knowing that if we die as He did, we ſhall alſo riſe as He did.

C H A P. XX.

I. **C**H R I S T being riſen from the Dead, diſcloſes Himſelf firſt to *Mary Magdalen*. II. Next, to the Apoſtles in the Abſence of *Thomas*. III. And after that, to *Thomas* himſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee in this Chapter, how Chriſt ſhewed himſelf after his Reſurrection; *Firſt*, to *Mary Magdalen*, and then to all the Apoſtles. It appears from the Account of St. *John*, that the Apoſtles did not at firſt believe the Reſurrection of our Lord, and that they were not fully convinced, till He had given them certain and repeated Proofs thereof. This is what we ſee particularly by the Example of St. *Thomas*, who would not believe that Chriſt was riſen, until He had both ſeen Him and touched his

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Hands, his Feet, and his Side; but after that he had thus satisfied himself of the Truth, which at first he refus'd to believe, he worshipp'd Him as his Saviour, and as his God. All these Apparitions of our Lord serve to prove, that He is really risen from the Dead, and to confirm the Sincerity of that Testimony which the Apostles bore upon this Occasion. Thus we can no longer doubt that Christ was the Son of God, that He has made a perfect Attainment for our Sins by his Death, and that as He himself is risen, He will also raise us at the last Day. Wherefore this Resurrection ought to strengthen our Faith; and let us, after the Example of *Mary* and the Apostles, who were so exceedingly rejoiced to see their Master risen, and who shewed so much Zeal and Love for Him; let us also bless God, for having given us in the Resurrection of his Son, such certain Proofs and Assurances of our own. This hope ought likewise to purifie us, and to sanctifie us; and we looking upon *Jesus* as our Lord and God, should continually render the Honour, Love, Obedience, and Praises that are due to Him. *Amen.*

C H A P. XXI.

I. **J**ESUS manifests himself to the Apostles near the Sea of *Tiberias*, and gives them Proofs of his Resurrection. II. He re-establishes *St. Peter* in his Apostleship, and foretells what was to happen to that Apostle, and to *St. John*; which finishes this Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E have seen, that our Lord was pleased to assure his Apostles of his Resurrection,

tion, not only by shewing himself to them, but in giving them marks of his Divine Power, and by eating in their Presence. This ought to convince us more and more of that great Truth upon which all our Comfort depends. II. We have likewise seen how Christ, intending to re-establish St. Peter in the Office of an Apostle, asked him three Times before, whether he loved Him. Our Lord obliged him to make these three Declarations, to the end, that this Apostle might be render'd more sensible of the Sin he had committed, in denying Him three times, and repair the Scandal he had thereby given. This teaches us, that Christ pardons none but such as confess their Sins, that repair them as well as they are able, and forsake them; and what He chiefly requires of us is, to love Him with all our Heart, so as to be able to say with St. Peter: *Lord, thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee.* It may be further observed, that when St. Peter had made this Declaration, Christ re-establish'd him to his Apostleship, by saying to him, *Feed my Sheep*; that He even foretold that he should undergo Martyrdom, which shewed, that the Fidelity of this Apostle should thenceforwards be proof against all Temptations. Thus God pardons all them that truly repent; thus He grants them his Grace anew; wherefore those whom God has thus pardoned, ought inviolably to adhere to his Service all the rest of their Lives. We see, *Lastly*, that our Lord foretels, that St. John should *tarry till He came.* That signifies, that this Apostle should live till he had seen the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Ruine of the *Jews.* 'Twas a Privilege that Christ thought fit to grant to this Disciple whom He loved; and this Promise was fulfilled, St. John having lived to a great Age, and long after all the o-

ther Apostles, and above thirty Years after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.

Here we finish the Reading of the Gospels: Let us bless God for having enlighten'd us with this heavenly Light; let us read and meditate incessantly upon these holy Books; and let us make the Things contained therein subservient to our Advancement in Faith and Piety, and to the Glory of God our Father, and of *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*





The ACTS.



CHAP. I.



HERE begins the Reading of the Acts of the Apostles, in which we see how the Christian Religion prevailed, and was established, after the Ascension of our Saviour, first at *Jerusalem*, and afterwards at several other Places, by the Means of the Apostles, and chiefly by the Ministry of *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*. This Book contains that period of Time which passed between the Ascension of Christ, and the first Imprisonment of *St. Paul* at *Rome*, making the Space of about Thirty Years.

The first Chapter relates two Things. I. The Ascension of our Lord. II. The Choice of *St. Matthias* into the Office of an Apostle.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That our Lord being risen, continued during Forty Days upon the Earth, that He might so much the more fully convince the Apostles of the Truth of his Resurrection; and to give them the Instructions that were necessary for them; that at the end of these forty Days, He was carried up to Heaven in their Presence, and that the Angels appeared to them, assuring them that *Jesus* was ascended into Heaven, and that He would come from thence at the last Day. This furnishes us with the most convincing Proofs of the Resurrection of our Lord, of his Ascension, and of the Certainty of his last Coming. These Truths being attested by the Evidence of the Apostles, by that of the Angels, as well as by the wonderful Effects that followed his Exaltation to the heavenly Glory. This Ascension ought particularly to convince us, that *Jesus* is the Son of God, that He has a Sovereign Authority over all Things, and that his Kingdom is spiritual and heavenly. It should likewise engage us continually to raise our Thoughts and our Desires towards that glorious Mansion where our Lord is exalted at the right Hand of his Father, and where He also prepares for us an everlasting Habitation. And since we know that He is to return from thence at the End of the World, we should live in a constant Practice of Godliness, in Expectation of the Coming of our Saviour. II. In the second Part of this Chapter there are two chief Things to be observed. One, that religious Assemblies are authorized by the Example of the Apostles, and the first Disciples of Christ, who, after his Ascension to Heaven, did commonly meet

meet together to pray. The other is, that as our Lord had chosen Twelve Apostles, one of the first Cares of St. *Peter* and his Collegues was, to establish an Apostle in the Place of *Judas*; that for this purpose, they made choice of two Persons, who had been Witnesses of the Life and Resurrection of our Saviour; but that one of those two, namely St. *Matthias*, was appointed by Prayer and Lot, because the Apostles were to be chosen immediately by Christ himself.

C H A P. II.

ST. *Luke* relates four Things in this Chapter. I. How the Apostles received the Holy Ghost upon the Day of Pentecost. II. The Discourse St. *Peter* had with the *Jews* on that Day. III. The Effect of this Discourse, which was the Conversion of three Thousand Persons. IV. The Condition in which the Church of *Jerusalem* was at that time.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE must observe, I. That Christ, by sending the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, fulfilled the Promises He had made them of sending a Comforter to them after his Departure, and thereby gave them plain and undoubted Proofs of his Exaltation to Heaven. He bestowed on them the Gift of speaking all kind of Languages, to shew they were to preach the Gospel to all the Nations of the Earth, and to put them into a Capacity of doing it. This Miracle happened on a solemn Day, and in the Presence of a great Multitude of People, the most of whom came to *Jerusalem* from all Parts of the World, to the end, that the Fame

thereof might spread on all sides, and dispose Men to receive the Preaching of the Apostles. II. The End and Design of the Discourse which St. *Peter* made that Day, was to teach the *Jews*, that what happened then was foretold by the Prophet *Joel*: That this *Jesus*, whom they had crucified, was risen again: That God had exalted Him to Heaven: That it was He who had diffused upon his Apostles these miraculous Gifts: And that the *Jews*, and all Mankind, ought to look upon Him as the Messiah, and as their Lord and King. This is also the Sum of the Gospel, and what we ought to believe concerning *Jesus Christ*. III. We are to observe the wonderful Efficacy of the Preaching of St. *Peter*, in the Conversion of those three Thousand *Jews* who then receiv'd Baptism; and the ready Obedience they yielded to the Word which was declared to them, should serve for an Example, and a Motive to us, to amend our Lives, and obey the Gospel. IV. All Christians should propose to themselves for a Pattern, what St. *Luke* tells us of the State of the Church of *Jerusalem*, and particularly of the Piety of those first Christians, of the admirable Union there was among them, and of the Innocency of their Lives and Manners. Let us learn from thence, diligently to attend at the Meetings and Exercises of Piety, to live in Peace and Concord, to practise Works of Charity, and to render our selves acceptable to God and Man, by the Purity of our Manners, and by the Holiness of our Behaviour.

C H A P. III.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Account of a Miracle done by St. *Peter*, in Healing a Cripple. And, II. a Discourse which this Apostle

Apostle held with the *Jews*, to convince them that the said Miracle was wrought in the Name of *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E restoring Health to the Lame Man, shews us, that presently after the Ascension of our Lord, the Apostles proved before all the *Jews*, by illustrious Miracles, that Christ was ascended to Heaven, that they had received the Holy Ghost, and that the *Jews* were filled with Admiration at these Miracles, which effectually contributed to the Establishment of the Christian Religion. II. We may next observe in the Discourse of St. *Peter*, the Zeal and Boldness with which that Apostle reproached the *Jews* for the Crime they had committed in Crucifying the Lord; and how he loudly declared, that this *Jesus* was the Messiah, whose Coming all the Prophets had foretold. 'Tis thus we ought always to confess the Name of our Lord and Saviour, and bear an authentick Testimony to the Truth. We see here moreover, that tho' the *Jews* had crucified the Son of God, St. *Peter* exhorts them to Repentance, and promises them, that their Sins should be blotted out, provided they would be converted, and not persevere stubbornly in their Unbelief; from whence we may infer, that a Return to the Grace of God, is open to all those who repent and amend. III. And Lastly, we see in this Chapter, that Christ is that great Prophet of whom *Moses* made mention, and of whom God said, that we ought to hear whatever He shall say; and that those who refuse to hear Him, shall be cut off from his People. These Words shew us plainly, that the
Design

Design of God is, that Men should obey *Jesus Christ*, and that those who will not obey Him, are excluded from Salvation. Let us seriously consider this matter; and since we have the Happiness to hear the Voice of the Son of God, and that it is likewise for our sakes He was sent into the World, that He might bless us, and turn us away from our Iniquities, let us yield Him the Obedience we owe Him, and receive with Gratitude and Faith this Blessing which is offer'd us in *Jesus Christ*; and to the end that we may partake thereof, let every one of us resolve to forsake his Sins.

C H A P. IV.

WE see here, I. The Imprisonment of the Apostles, their appearing before the Council of the *Jews*, and what happened thereupon. II. A Prayer which they made to God, after their having been strictly forbid to speak any more in the Name of *Christ Jesus*. III. The State of the Church of *Jerusalem*, and above all, the wonderful Love and Charity that reigned there.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we see, I. The Accomplishment of what our Saviour had told the Apostles, namely, that they should be cast into Prison, and brought before Magistrates for his sake; but 'tis likewise to be observed, that the Number of Christians increased daily, notwithstanding the Opposition of the *Jews*. II. *St. Luke* informs us, that the Apostles appearing before the Council, spake there with a holy Boldness, and with so much Strength, that their Enemies were amased at it, and had nothing

thing to charge them with. This was an Effect of the Divine Power with which the Apostles were endowed, and of the Promises Christ had made them to assist them, and give them such Wisdom as could not be resisted. III. The Zeal which the Apostles shewed upon the Magistrates forbidding them to Preach any longer the Gospel, and their Answer, that it was not fit to obey Man rather than God, is an Example, by which we see that we ought never to suffer the fear of Men to make us ever disobey God, and to dissemble the Truth. IV. The fervent Prayer which the Apostles offered our Lord, to implore his Assistance, shews the Courage and Confidence with which they were animated. And the Tokens God gave them of his Presence, by shaking the Place where they were assembled, was a Confirmation to them that God heard and accepted their Prayer, and that He would always cover them with his Protection. From thence we learn, that we must have recourse to God with Reliance by Prayer, especially when his Glory is concerned; that God hears those who call upon Him; and that when we defend his Cause, we ought not to fear the vain Efforts of Men. V. What is said at the end of this Chapter, about the Union and agreement among the Believers, and of the Use they made of their Goods, shews that the Spirit of Christianity is a Spirit of Charity and Concord, that true Christians have but one Heart and one Soul, and that they willingly and freely exercise Charity towards necessitous Persons.

C H A P. V. 1,—16.

I. **S**T. Luke gives the Relation of the Sin of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and of the Punishment God inflicted upon them. II. He makes mention

mention next of the Miracles of the Apostles, and the wonderful Progress of the Gospel at *Jerusalem*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Reflexions that may be made upon the History of *Ananias*. I. God struck that Man and his Wife Dead, for having Lye'd to St. *Peter*, to the end that that Example might keep in awe all the Members of the Church, and support the Authority of the Apostles in the beginning of the Preaching of the Gospel, and to shew the Divinity of the Doctrine they Propagated. II. This event teaches us, that God knows Mens Hearts, and the most hidden Things; and that tho' we may be deceived, yet He cannot; and that those who Lye to Men, and particularly to their spiritual Guides, upon such Occasions when they are bound to speak Truth, do Lye to God, and expose themselves to his Vengeance. III. It appears from hence, that it is a great Sin to make Use of Falshood and Deceit in the exercise of Charity; that it is in our own Power to give or withhold our Hand, but when once we have devoted a thing to God and to Religious Uses, we are not allowed to take it back, nor even to retain the smallest part thereof. IV. We must particularly observe what is said in this Chapter, concerning the surprizing Miracles wrought by the Apostles, and the prodigious increase of the Church at *Jerusalem*, as also the Love and Reverence that all the World had for the Apostles and the Christians: These are Authentick Proofs of the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine and of its Efficacy. And since this Progress of the Gospel was the Fruit, not only of the Miracles of the Apostles, but likewise

likewise of the Union that reigned among the Faithful, and of the Innocency of their Manners; we may learn from thence, how effectual the good Life of Christians is, to render the Religion of Christ venerable, and to induce Men to glorifie God, and embrace the Profession of the Truth.

C H A P. V. 17,—42.

- I. **T**H E Apostles are imprison'd the Second Time, but God delivers them by an Angel, and they continue to Preach the Gospel.
 II. They are brought again before the Council, which condemns them to be whip'd, and forbids them to Preach any longer the Doctrine of Christ.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to observe here for our Instruction is, I. The Imprisonment of the Apostles, and the wonderful Manner by which God caused the Gates of the Prison to be opened by an Angel. This was a token of God's Protecting them, which ought to fill them with Joy and Confidence, and convince their Enemies, that it was in vain for them to oppose the Preaching of the Gospel. II. We see that the Apostles coming out of the Prison, went immediately to teach in the Temple, notwithstanding the Prohibitions they had received; and that being summoned for it before the Council, they spoke there with great Wisdom and Constancy, declaring that they were obliged to obey God rather than Men. This is a noble instance of Courage and Zeal, and a Lesson to us always to follow the Dictates of our Conscience, without being afraid of the Threatnings of

of Men ; and that neither the Orders nor Interdicts of Magistrates should ever hinder us from obeying God, and doing what He commands us. III. What *Garnaliel* said in the Council, merits the following Observations : That God made Use of the wise Advice of this Senator to save the Apostles, and to hinder the Council from coming to a Resolution of putting them to Death ; that pious and moderate Advices ought to be followed ; that we ought never to do any thing thro' Passion and rash Zeal, especially in matters of Religion ; that the Designs, of which God is not the Author, are sooner or later Defeated of themselves ; but that those which proceed from Him, are infallibly fulfilled, in Spight of the Opposition ; and that those who withstand 'em, wage War against God. IV. The last Reflexion is, that as the Apostles having been condemned to be whipt, rejoiced that they had the Honour to suffer such a Disgrace for the Sake of Christ, and continued to Preach the Gospel ; so we too ought constantly to bear, and even with Joy, the evils to which we may be exposed by doing our Duty, which Duty we ought always to discharge with Gladness and Perseverance.

C H A P. VI.

THIS Chapter contains two Parts. I. It represents the Establishment of Deacons, whose Function was to administer the Alms of the Church : And, II. The Accusation against *St. Stephen* before the Council of the Jews.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E have here an Account of the Institution of Deacons, who were appointed

ed by the Apostles to distribute the Charity of the Believers. Though this Office be at this time abolished in the greatest Part of the Christian Churches, through the fault of Men, and the disorder that has crept into it several Ways, it is nevertheless a Divine Institution, and very useful for the Edification of the Church. And since God thought fit that there should be Persons appointed for the Administration of Alms, and that for the same Purpose there should be chosen wise Persons, and such as were filled with the Holy Ghost, it appears from thence, that Charity is a most important Duty, that the Alms of the Faithful ought to be distributed with great Prudence and Wisdom, and that it should be done by Men of Integrity, and fearing God, and that they should be appointed by the Church; and in general, none should be put into Ecclesiastical Offices, but Persons that have a good Testimony, and that are of known Piety and Probity. II. The Charge which some *Jews* brought against *St. Stephen*, who was a Man full of Faith and Virtue, shews, that good Men, and the most Zealous Servants of God, may be exposed to the Hatred of the World, and to Calumnies; but that should not hinder us from discharging our Duty with Courage, nor from fulfilling the Obligations of our Calling, and of our Conscience.

C H A P. VII.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Discourse *St. Stephen* made before the Council of the *Jews*: And, II. The relation of his Martyrdom and Death.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Design of St. *Stephen*, in the Discourse we have read, was to prove, that he was neither an Enemy to God nor the Law, as he was accused to be, but that he worshiped the God of *Abraham* and of the Patriarchs; that Christ was the Messiah that was to be born from the Posterity of *Abraham*, and whose coming *Moses* and the Prophets had foretold; that the Covenant of God and His Service were not tied to the Nation of the *Jews*, nor to the Temple of *Jerusalem*, neither was it confined to the ceremonial Worship which *Moses* had prescribed; that the *Jews* had at all times been rebellious against God; that they had rejected and persecuted the Prophets; and that therefore it was not strange that they should reject Christ, and Persecute his Servants. We ought to observe in this Discourse of St. *Stephen*, the great Zeal wherewith he was animated, and the holy Liberty which he took in reproaching the *Jews* of their Hardness, though he knew very well, that in speaking thus, he exposed himself to their Rage, and to the Danger of Losing his Life. II. We see in the next Place, that the *Jews* were so transported with Rage, as to condemn him to be stoned; but that God, for his Encouragement, having caused him to see Heaven opened, and Jesus Christ sitting on his right Hand, he endured with Constancy that cruel Death; and that at the Time when he was stoned he shewed his Faith and Charity, by calling upon the Lord with his last Breath, and by Praying for those who put him to Death. This Death of the first Martyr of the Church, should teach us to undergo with Courage, all the Evils which the Profession of the Truth may bring

bring upon us, and even Death it self, if we be called to it; to pardon those that do us the greatest Harm, and to pray for them. This Example is a further Proof how sweet is the Death of true Belivers, and with what Comfort it is attended; which should strongly incite us to Godliness, to the end that at our last Hour we may likewise put our Souls into the Hands of the Lord Jesus, and sleep peacefully in expectation of the blessed Resurrection.

C H A P. VIII. 1, — 25.

WE see here, I. The Persecution that was raised against the Church of *Jerusalem*, after the Death of *St. Stephen*: And, II. How *St. Philip* preached the Gospel at *Samaria*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **B**Y the first Part of this Chapter, we find that the Death of *St. Stephen*, and the Persecution that was raised against the Church of *Jerusalem*, turned to the advancement of the Gospel, since the Believers, who were thereupon scattered, Preached the Word of God in several Places. Thus we see how the Persecutions which the Enemies of the Church raised against it, contributed towards its Increase, and to the spreading the Religion of Christ more and more. II. What is said in the second Part of this Chapter, of the Credit which the People of *Samaria* gave to *Simon* the Magician, shews that they who know not the Truth, are easily seduced by Impostors; but the Change that happened in that City after *St. Philip* had Preached the Gospel there, shews that Truth will triumph over Error and Falshood. We have an Example in *Simon*, who consented to be Baptized, being transported

sported at the Miracles wrought by St. *Philip*, which proves, that the Wicked are sometimes affected at the Excellency of the Gospel, so far as even to embrace the Profession of it; but not acting upon good Principles, their Conversion is unsincere. Upon what is added, that *Simon* offer'd Money to St. *Peter*, to obtain the Faculty of Communicating the Holy Ghost, and the Power of working Miracles; and that St. *Peter* being filled with Indignation, denounced the Judgment of God against him; we must observe, that it is a detestable Impiety to make Religion subservient to Covetousness and Ambition, and to pretend to buy or sell holy Things after what manner soever. It may nevertheless be consider'd, that St. *Peter* exhorted *Simon* to repent, and even that that wicked Man intreated the Apostles to interceed for him. This teaches us, that we ought never wholly to abandon the greatest Sinners, nor refuse them the Assistance of our Exhortations and Prayers.

C H A P. VIII. 26,——40.

ST. *Luke* relates here the History of the Conversion of a Nobleman, who was one of the principal Officers of *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*. That Man was of the Number of those *Gentile* Profelytes, who had renounced Idolatry, and who came from time to time to worship God at *Jerusalem*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E general Observation that may be made upon this History is, that God called the Eunuch of Queen *Candace* to the Christian Faith, to shew that the Gospel would be soon

soon preach'd to all Nations, and by the Means of this Man, to spread the true Religion throughout *Ethiopia*. The next Thing remarkable is, that this Lord came to worship God at *Jerusalem*, and that he was employ'd in Reading the Scriptures when God sent *Philip* to instruct him. We may learn from thence, that Providence takes a particular Care of those who have good Intentions, and that God grants a new Measure of his Graces to those that make a right Use of what they have already received, and seek the Truth in Sincerity. The Desire which the Eunuch shewed, to understand a Passage of *Isaiah* that he read, and the Docility with which he hearken'd to *Philip*, shews, that we must labour to be instructed in the Truths of Salvation, as well by our selves, as by the Assistance of others. That we ought not to neglect the Instructions of such Ministers as God has appointed, and that we ought to hear them with Docility. Lastly, We find that the Eunuch, after having heard St. *Philip*, desired to be Baptized ; that he made an open Profession of his Faith, and returned to his own Country full of Joy. 'Tis thus, that as soon as the Truth is made known to us, we ought to embrace the Profession of it, and never to delay the Discharge of our Duty. This likewise teaches, that in order to be Christians, we must believe with our whole Heart, that Christ is the Son of God ; and that the Happiness of knowing Him, and living in his Church, should be all our Comfort, and all our Joy.

C H A P. IX. 1,——21.

THIS is the History of the Conversion of St. *Paul*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought most carefully to attend to this History, and consider, I. That *St. Paul*, who was so excellent an Apostle, was, before his Conversion, a declared Enemy of *Jesus Christ*. This Apostle tells us himself thereupon, that God called him in that Condition, to the end that he might make him an illustrious Example of his Mercy towards Sinners; nevertheless it must be remembered, that tho' he persecuted the Church, it was through Ignorance and a false Zeal, whilst he even thought that he did what was pleasing to God; as for the rest of his Life, it was unblameable. II. We have seen, that whilst *Saul* was going to *Damascus*, to persecute the Christians, Christ stopp'd him near that City by an Apparition that fill'd him with Terror; that He spoke to him from Heaven, and struck him with Blindness. Our Lord proceeded in this manner, because, in the Disposition and Temper in which *Saul* was, it was necessary to use very violent Methods to cure him of his Prejudices, and to render him tractable. Thus God, out of his Goodness and Wisdom, makes use of the most proper Means to bring back Sinners from their Wanderings. III. These Words, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* shew, that Christ looks upon that which is done against his Members and against his Church, as done against Himself; and the Humility with which *Saul* answered: *Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?* shews, that when God calls us, we ought to give up our Selves entirely to Him, and to follow his Commands. IV. It must be consider'd, that as soon as God had prepared *Saul* to hearken to Him, and to receive what should be told him, He

He referr'd him to *Ananias*, to be inform'd by him what he was to do, and that in the mean time, He prepared *Ananias* by a Vision to go and visit *Saul*, and to instruct him ; thus God disposed matters with great Wisdom to finish the Work of the Conversion of *Saul*. V. *Lastly*, We have seen how *Saul*, after having been in Fasting and in Prayer for the Space of three Days, recover'd his Sight, and how he was instructed and baptized by *Ananias*, and presently after began to preach the Gospel. We ought to admire the Power and Goodness of God in this Event, which was so wholesome to *St. Paul*, and so beneficial to the whole Church ; and this great and sudden Change which was wrought in this Apostle shews, that such as are sincerely converted, do entirely alter their Opinion and Behaviour, giving open and certain Proofs of the Sincerity of their Conversion.

C H A P. IX. 23,—43.

TH E R E are three Things to be observed here. I. That *St. Paul*, after his Conversion, being persecuted by the *Jews* at *Damascus*, went to *Jerusalem*, from whence he was driven by a fresh Persecution, and forced to fly to *Cesarea*, and to *Tarsus*. II. The happy Condition of the Churches of *Judea*, and of the neighbouring Parts. And, III. the Miracle of the Healing of *Eneas*, and the Raising of *Tabitha* from the Dead.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FR O M this Portion of Scripture we may gather, I. That as soon as *St. Paul* was converted, and began to preach the Gospel, he was persecuted by the *Jews*. God thought fit,
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by that means, to try the Faithfulness of this Apostle, and to teach him to suffer for *Jesus Christ*; and this Example is a Lesson to us, that those who would follow the Lord, and lead a godly Life, must be prepared to suffer the Contradiction of Men. II. What *St. Luke* says of the happy State of the Churches of *Judea, Galilee, and Samaria*, offers two Reflexions to our Mind; *one*, that although God permits the Church to be persecuted, He likewise gives it ease; *the other*, that what renders Churches happy and flourishing is, when they walk in the Fear of the Lord, and that the Gifts of the Holy Ghost are multiplied in them. III. The two Miracles related about the End of this Chapter prove, that the Apostles wrought the same Miracles as our Lord had done whilst He was on the Earth, which contributed to the Conversion of a great Number of People. We have particularly, in the History of *Tabitha*, a noble Example to stir us up to Piety and works of Charity; and the Resurrection of this holy Woman may be look'd on, as a Reward that God was pleased to grant to her Piety and Faith, and as a Proof that should confirm us in the Belief of the Resurrection, and the Hope of a better Life.

C H A P. X.

THIS Chapter contains an Account of the Conversion of *Cornelius*, the Centurion, to the Christian Religion. This Man was a Pagan by Birth, but worshipped the true God.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HIS History is recorded, to shew us after what manner the Gospel began to be preached to the *Gentiles*. Here we must admire the Ways which Providence made use of for converting *Cornelius*; and how, whilst God sent an Angel to him, to induce him to seek for St. Peter, He disposed that Apostle to go to *Cornelius*, which he would not have done, if God had not revealed it to him, that he ought to look upon no Man as unclean, and the Gospel was to be declared to the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. To this alluded the Vision of the Vessel, in which were Creatures, that the *Jews*, by their Law, were forbid to eat of. Besides this general Consideration, it may be observed, that the Prayers and Alms of *Cornelius* were called to remembrance by God; that on the same Account God sent an Angel to him, and brought him to the Knowledge of Christ by the Ministry of St. Peter. We may learn from thence how acceptable to God Works of Piety and Charity are, and that He bestows new Lights and Graces to those who have an upright Heart, and call upon Him, and fear Him. II. We ought seriously to meditate upon the important Truths that are contained in the Discourse St. Peter made at the House of *Cornelius*, and particularly the following: *That God is no respecter of Persons, but that in every Nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with Him.* And the other, that *Who-soever believes in Christ, shall receive remission of Sins through his Name.* III. The Attention, the Submission and Obedience with which *Cornelius*, and all his House, heard St. Peter, ought to teach us to receive the Word of God with the

same Dispositions when 'tis declared to us. IV. And *Lastly*, The Conversion of *Cornelius*, obliges us to render Thanks to God; US, I say, who were formerly Heathens, forasmuch as He then vouchsafed to admit the *Gentiles* into his Covenant, and to pour forth his Spirit and Grace upon them, as well as upon the *Jews*.

CHAP. XI.

THIS Chapter consists of two Parts. I. In the former we see that the *Jews* of *Jerusalem*, who had been converted to the Christian Religion, being offended that St. *Peter* should go to *Cornelius* that was a *Gentile*, they were inform'd by this Apostle, how God had made known to him, that he should preach the Gospel to *Cornelius*, and of the Success of his Preaching. II. In the latter Part, St. *Luke* relates, that the Gospel spread it self in several Places, and particularly at *Antioch*: he makes mention also of a Prophet named *Agabus*, who foretold a Famine.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E see in the former Part of this Chapter, that the Christians of *Jerusalem* were scandaliz'd at first, because St. *Peter* had been with *Cornelius*; but having learn'd that this Apostle went to him by the Order of God, and that even the Holy Ghost had been given to *Cornelius*, and those that were with him, they were pacified, and rejoiced that God was pleased thus to call the *Gentiles* to Salvation. This teaches us, that instead of being jealous of the Favours that God bestows upon others, we ought to rejoice thereat, especially when they are called to Repentance and everlasting Life.

II.

II. Upon the latter Part, there may be three Things observ'd. The *first* is, that the Dispersion of the Church of *Jerusalem*, and the Persecution that was rais'd against the Christians, contributed to spread the Gospel in several Places, and to establish several Churches, particularly the Church of *Antioch*, where the Disciples of *Jesus Christ* began to be called Christians. The *second*, That these Churches were founded and entertained by the Ministry of *Barnabas*, of *Paul*, and other, Persons that labour'd for their Edification. This shews, that the Ministry of the Servants of God is of great Use in the Church, provided it be perform'd by good Men, and such as are filled with Faith and the Holy Ghost, as were those *St. Luke* mentions. The *third* Consideration relates to the Prediction that *Agabus* made of a Famine that was to happen. This Prediction proves, that God knows future Things, and that nothing comes to pass in this World but by his Providence. And the Resolution the Christians took to make a Collection in *Judea* for their Brethren, is an Example that should provoke us to assist those that are in Want, and especially those that are our Brethren, and the Members of *Jesus Christ*.

C H A P. XII.

ST. *Luke* relates three Things in this Chapter. I. The Martyrdom of *St. James*, Brother to *St. John*. II. The Imprisonment of *St. Peter*, and his miraculous Deliverance. III. The Death of King *Herod*, who died being struck by an Angel.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we see, I. How the Apostle *St. James*, as well as *St. Stephen*, sealed the Truth of the Gospel with his Blood ; and that the Christian Religion was establish'd by the Sufferings of those that preach'd it, which confirms the Truth and Divinity of it. It is to be observed, II. That God, who had permitted *St. James* to be put to Death, did likewise permit *St. Peter* to be imprison'd by King *Herod*, but that this Apostle was miraculously deliver'd by an Angel. This wonderful Deliverance gives us occasion to own, that tho' God does sometimes allow the Wicked to execute their Designs, yet when it pleases Him, He restrains them, and sets bounds to their Wickedness, and that He always watches over his faithful Servants. We likewise see by this Event, how powerful Prayer is, since the Church of *Jerusalem* obtained the Deliverance of *St. Peter*, by the Prayers they put up to God for him. III. The Death of *Herod*, who was eaten of Worms, for a Punishment of his Pride, is an Example, that God confounds the Proud, and particularly, that the Persecutors of the Church do commonly make a fatal End, and that cruel and haughty Princes, sooner or later, receive the Punishment due to their Crimes, and to their Wickedness.

C H A P. XIII. 1, — 13.

ST. *Paul* and *St. Barnabas* go to *Antioch* in *Cyprus*, and from thence to *Paphos*, where *St. Paul* smote a Jewish Impostor with Blindness, and where he converted to the Faith the
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Proconsul *Sergius Paulus*, who was the first Magistrate of that Island.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE see in the Beginning of this Chapter, that *St. Paul* and *St. Barnabas*, passing through several Places of *Asia*, and *Greece*, by the Order of the Holy Ghost, and after that the Ministers of the Church of *Antioch* had prayed and fasted, did successfully preach the Gospel in those Parts. These are Tokens of the Divinity of their Calling ; but we have especially one remarkable Proof in the Conversion of the Governour of *Paphos*, and in the miraculous Punishment of *Elimas*, who would have dissuaded the Governour from embracing the Christian Religion. We see in these two Persons, one of whom believed the Preaching of *St. Paul*, as 't'other opposed it with all his Might, that the Word of God is received by some, and rejected by others ; and that those who withstand the Truth, and turn away others from Faith and Piety, do draw upon themselves the severest Judgments of God.

C H A P. XIII. 14, — 52.

I. **S**T. *Paul*, in a Discourse which he makes to the *Jews* of *Antioch*, shews, that God, according to the Promises He had given to their Fathers, had sent *Jesus Christ* into the World ; that this *Jesus*, whom they had crucified, was risen again ; that He was the Messiah ; and that all those who should believe in Him, would obtain Salvation. II. Several Persons, as well *Jews* as *Gentiles*, believing the Preaching of *St. Paul*, the *Jews* were so provoked at them, as to drive away him and *Barnabas* ;

bas ; but the Apostles declared to them, that since they rejected the Gospel, they would from that Time forwards Preach it to the *Gentiles*, and so left them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Discourse of St. *Paul*, which we have now read, is an abstract of the Christian Doctrine. I. This Apostle proves to the *Jews*, that Christ is born of the Race of *David*, and that it is He who is the promised Messiah, which He shews by the Testimony of *John* the Baptist, and by the Prediction of the Prophets. He declares to them next, that this Jesus, who was Crucified at *Jerusalem*, was raised from the Dead, conformably to the Prophecies of the Old Testament. Lastly, He teaches them, that the Design of the coming of Christ, was to obtain for Men the Remission of Sins ; that accordingly all such as believed in Him should be justified ; but that those who rejected Him should be excluded from Salvation. Since this is the Sum of the Christian Religion, we ought seriously to attend thereto, and to observe, that it is only by Faith in Jesus Christ, and by obedience to the Gospel, that we can be saved. II. As for the effect of St. *Paul*'s Discourse, we see that several believed his Preaching, but that the *Jews* continued Obstinate in their Unbelief, which was the Reason why this Apostle told 'em that he would turn to the *Gentiles*. This shews how different are the Effects which the Preaching of the Gospel produces ; that some grow better by it, others worse ; that the wicked, instead of yielding to Truth, oppose it, and harden themselves in their Unbelief, and that at last God does justly forsake those who Judge themselves unworthy of Everlasting Life.

C H A P. XIV.

I. **S**T. *Paul* and *St. Barnabas* Preach at *Iconium*. II. From thence they go to *Lystria*, where having healed a Man deprived of his Limbs, the Inhabitants of that Place took them for Gods, which gave an occasion to *St. Paul*, to exhort them to renounce Idolatry. III. Soon after, this Apostle was Stoned by the People of the Town, whom the *Jews* had stirred up against him; but God having saved his Life, he went away to other Places, and then returned to *Antioch*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE continue to see that the Apostles exercised their Ministry with great Zeal, and in the midst of Persecutions, and that *St. Paul* in particular felt every where the Rage of the *Jews*, since he was in Danger of being stoned with *Barnabas* at *Iconium*, and afterwards was actually stoned at *Lystria*, and even left for Dead; but we likewise see that God preserved the Apostles in the Dangers to which they were exposed, that He wrought great Miracles by them, and that although they met with great Opposition from the *Jews*, they had the Comfort of bringing several Gentiles to the Faith. II. We ought next most seriously to observe the Zeal and Humility that *St. Paul* shewed when the Inhabitants of *Lystria* took him and *Barnabas* for Gods, and would have paid them divine Honours. This teaches us, that we ought not to seek our own Glory, and that our great aim should be to glorify God alone, and to cause others to know and worship Him. III. The Discourse made to the *Lycaoneans* shews, that God did at all times reveal Him-

Himself to Mankind, by the Works of Nature and Providence, and has always given them evidences of his Goodness. Upon which we ought to consider, that if the Blessings God bestows upon Men in a natural State, should engage them to Love and Serve Him, we are much more obliged thereto; we, I say, to whom He has revealed Himself by the Gospel, and to whom He has given such strong Proofs of his Love, by sending his Son Jesus Christ into the World. *Lastly*, the Care which the Apostles took to go to several Places, that they might exhort the Faithful, and chiefly establish Pastors in every Church, shews the necessity of the holy Ministry, and that the Will of God is, that there should be every where Ministers to teach, to exhort, and to govern the Church.

C H A P XV.

TH E S E are the Contents of this Chapter. I. A Dispute being raised in the Church of *Antioch*, by reason that the *Jews*, who had been converted to Christianity, insisted that the Gentiles, who likewise embraced the same Faith, ought to be Circumcised as the *Jews*, and observe the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. II. St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas* were sent to *Jerusalem* to consult the Apostles upon this question, who being met together, declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to observe Circumcision and the legal Ceremonies, but that it would be sufficient for them to believe in Christ Jesus, and to obey the Gospel. And this is what the Apostles communicated to the Church of *Antioch*, in a Letter which they sent by St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*. III. After which, those two Apostles departed from thence to other Places.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have here a very plain Explication of the Doctrine of Justification, on which Account this Chapter deserves a particular Attention; it must be observed here, I. That the Question proposed was not to know whether the Gentiles, in order to Salvation, were obliged to keep the Commandments of Christ, and to do good Works; but whether they were obliged to Submit themselves to Circumcision, and the rest of the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. II. It must be next remembered, that the Apostles determined two Things upon this Question: The *First*, that the Converted Gentiles ought not to be obliged to Circumcise themselves, and practise the *Jewish* Ceremonies; but that 'twas sufficient to Salvation, that they should sincerely believe in Christ. This the Apostles proved, because God had spread his Spirit upon the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and had given them the Faith; and even from the Nature of the *Mosaical* Ceremonies, as well as by the Oracles of the Prophets. This is also the Doctrine which *St. Paul* lays down in his Epistles, where he teaches, that *we are Justified by Faith alone in Jesus Christ without the Works of the Law*. The *Second* thing which the Apostles declared was, that the Gentiles should abstain from what had been sacrificed to Idols, from things Strangled, and from Blood. The reason of this Prohibition was, because the Use of these things, as well as Fornication, were Part of the Idolatrous Worship of the *Gentiles*, and that therefore if Christians did not abstain from these things, it might have drawn them into Idolatry, and confirmed the Gentiles in their false Religion. It appears from hence, that the Apostles have not excused Men from the Observation
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of the Moral Law, but that they have only dispensed with the Ceremonial Law. And that, on the contrary, in teaching that we are Justified by Faith, they establish the necessity of good Works, since Faith cannot be sincere if it does not produce good Works, and Obedience to the Gospel. III. As for what relates to the Separation of St. *Barnabas* from St. *Paul*, mentioned by St. *Luke* at the end of this Chapter, we see indeed therein Tokens of humane Weakness, which the sacred Writers have not concealed from us ; but however it appears, that both these holy Men did still attend their Duty, and laboured incessantly in advancing the Kingdom of Christ.

C H A P. XVI. 1,—15.

ST. *Paul* calls *Timothy* to the Ministry, and after having been in divers Places, he arrives at *Philippi*, where he Preaches the Gospel, and where a Woman named *Lidia* was converted to the Christian Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two things to be observed, in the relation St. *Luke* gives of the Calling *Timothy* to the holy Ministry. The *First* is, that *Timothy*, who was so excellent a Servant of God, had been Educated in Piety ; and that tho' he was Young, every Body gave him a good Character, by which we see that none should be settled in the Ministry, but Persons that fear God from their Youth, and have the Testimony of a good and holy Life. The *Second*, that St. *Paul*, who condemned the Circumcision when they attempted to impose it on the *Gentiles* as a necessary Duty, did notwithstanding circumcise *Timothy*, lest the

the *Jews* should reject his Ministry, under pretence that his Father was a *Gentile*. This is an Example of Prudence and Charity, by which we are taught, that in indifferent Matters we must accommodate our selves as much as possible to humane Weakness, to avoid all that may give Offence, and to have Regard to what may most contribute to the Peace and Edification of the Church. Upon what *St. Luke* says, that the Spirit did not suffer *St. Paul* to go to *Asia*, and that he was warned by a Vision to Preach the Gospel in *Macedonia*, we are to observe, that it was God who guided the Apostles to the Places where they could do most good, and where their Presence was most necessary. 'Tis thus, that God does not always think fit, that the Gospel should be Preached in all kinds of Places, but He reveals it to certain People rather than to others, for Reasons which He reserves to Himself. Lastly, *St. Luke* tells us, that *St. Paul* Preached the Gospel successfully at *Philippi*, and that there was a Woman called *Lydia*, who hearkened to the Apostle, and whose Heart God opened. This shews us, that Faith is produced by hearing the Word of God, and by the Efficacy of his Grace, which penetrates and melts the Heart. We have likewise in this Woman an Example of Docility, Zeal and Charity, which we ought to set before our selves for a Pattern.

C H A P. XVI. 16,——40.

WE have here, I. The relation of a Tumult raised against *Paul* and *Silas*, while they were at *Philippi*, because that Apostle had delivered a Maid Servant from an evil Spirit wherewith she was Possessed. II. *St. Paul* and *Silas* were both Scourged and cast into Prison,

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but being wonderfully delivered by God, the Jaylor was converted to Christianity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

UPON this History we are to observe ; I. That St. *Paul* having delivered a Maid Servant from an evil Spirit, with which she was Possessed ; the Masters of the said Servant, instead of being affected with the Miracle, perceiving they had lost the Profit she had brought to them by Divination, stirred up the Magistrates against this Apostle. This shews how great a Power there is in self-interest, to excite the Passions of Men, and to hinder them from knowing, and receiving the Truth. II. We are to observe, that St. *Paul* and *Silas*, having been scourged and imprisoned, by order of the Magistrates of *Philippi*, shewed a wonderful Constancy, even so far as to praise God, and sing Psalms in the Prison ; Thus Christians receive not only with Patience, but likewise with Joy, the Evils they are exposed to, for the sake of Christ. III. We see, that God opened the Doors of the Prison by an *Earthquake*, and that the Apostles had the Comfort of Converting the Jaylor. This is a remarkable Instance of the divine Protection over his faithful Servants ; whereby we may perceive, that God never wants means to deliver them ; and that all that was done against the Apostles turned to the Glory of God, to the Propagation of the Gospel, and their greatest Comfort. IV. We see at the end of this Chapter, the Allegation of St. *Paul*, that he was a Citizen of *Rome*, to oblige the Magistrates of *Philippi* to own the wrong they were in, for having caused him and *Silas* to be Scourged and Imprisoned, without any Form of Justice. This he did, to shew his Innocency, and for the Honour of the Gospel,

Gospel, which he Preached; as for the rest, it appeared plain enough, that *St. Paul* did not fear the sufferings, since if he had declared at first, that he was a Citizen of *Rome*, he might have avoided both the Scourging and Imprisonment. Thus we see, that he joyned great Prudence to an admirable Patience, and a profound Humility.

CH A P. XVII. 1,—15.

I. **S**T. *Paul* and *Silas* Preach the Gospel with Success at *Thessalonica*, but the Jews having stirred up the Magistrates and People of that City against them, they go to *Berea*, and there convert several Persons. II. But being Persecuted there again by the *Jews*, *St. Paul* leaves that Town, and goes to *Athens*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Arrival of *St. Paul* and *Silas* at *Thessalonica*, and at *Berea*, their Preaching in those two Cities, and the Tumult which the *Jews* raised against them, shews that the Apostles were exposed to continual Persecutions on the side of the Jews, who were the most bitter Enemies of the Gospel; but that they had likewise the Comfort of gaining every where Souls to Christ. II. But that which is most particularly to be observed here is, the Example of the faithful at *Berea*, who, as *St. Paul* tells us, received chearfully the Word of God, and examined the Scriptures, to see whether what *St. Paul* Preached to them, was agreeable thereto. From thence we ought to learn to receive the Truth with Docility and Readiness, and at the same time, with Knowledge and Discernment, and to that effect, to examine by the Word of God, the Doctrine that is Preach-

ed to us, so that we may receive nothing that is not conformable to that divine Word, which is the only Rule of our Faith, and to submit our selves obediently to all that agrees therewith.

C H A P. XVII. 16,——34.

I. **S**T. *Paul* being at *Athens*, which was a very considerable City of *Greece*, declares the Gospel there: And, II. he makes an excellent Discourse to wean the *Athenians* from Idolatry, and to give them the Knowledge of the true God, and of *Jesus Christ*. III. The Preaching of St. *Paul* was attended with the Conversion of several Persons.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to observe here is, I. The great Zeal of St. *Paul*, who being concerned to see the City of *Athens* over-run with Idolatry, resolved to preach the Gospel there; and being intreated by some Philosophers to inform them of the Doctrine he taught, did not scruple to discourse to them upon the true Religion. In Imitation of this Apostle, we ought to be lively touch'd when we see Men engag'd in Sin and Error, and to lay hold upon all Occasions that offer, to deliver them from thence. II. We may have observed in the Discourse that St. *Paul* made to the *Athenians*, on one side, the Wisdom and Prudence of this Apostle, who took a Handle, even from their Superstitions, to speak to them about their true God; and on the other, the Evidence and Force wherewith he proved to them, by the clearest and strongest Arguments, and by the Testimony of their own Poets, that there is but one God, Almighty,
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and All-Gracious, who has created all Things; and that it is an extream Folly, and the greatest of Errors, to worship Idols of Gold, Silver, or Stone, as did the *Gentiles*. The Discourse of *St. Paul*, contains the principal Truths of Religion: We learn from thence, that there is but one only God, Creator and Preserver of the World; that this God is not far from every one of us; that He does not stand in need of our Service, or any thing else from us, since it is He that gives us all, Life, Motion, and Being. But above all, we ought to attend to these Words, which are the Abstract of the Doctrine and Duties of the Gospel, that *God now commandeth all Men every where to repent; because He hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained*. All these Truths, which *St. Paul* teaches us here, tend to stir us up to serve God, to fear Him, to love Him, and to obey the Gospel. We see, III. and *Lastly*, that this Discourse of *St. Paul* was attended with the Conversion of some Persons, but that the greatest Part of those who heard him continued in Unbelief. Thus it is, that the Preaching of the Word of God operates Conversion in some, whilst others scoff at and reject it.

C H A P. XVIII.

I. *ST. Paul* dwells at *Corinth* a Year and a half, where he converts a great Number of People, but is accused by the *Jews* before the Magistrates. II. From thence he goes to *Ephesus*, to *Jerusalem*, to *Antioch*, and other Places, to visit the Churches, and to confirm them in the Faith. III. There is mention made about the End of this Chapter of *Apollos*, who

who was a Minister of the Gospel, famous for his Zeal, and his great Talents.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N what St. *Luke* relates of the Stay St. *Paul* made at *Corinth*, we may observe the Zeal wherewith this Apostle laboured every where for the Advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, his Disinterestedness, and his Prudence, which appeared by his choosing rather to work with his own Hands for his Subsistence, than to be maintained at the Charge of the Church; the Crosses and Troubles he met with from the *Jews*; the Protection wherewith God cover'd him; and the Comfort he had in Converting a great Number of People in that City, and of Founding there a very noble Church. Thus the Christian Religion was more and more established by the Preaching of the Apostles, and in spite of all Oppositions of the *Jews*, and of other Enemies of the Truth. II. The several Journeys and Voyages of St. *Paul*, related in this Chapter, shew that he was continually employed in the Functions of his Office, and that he labour'd with indefatigable Application in the Edification of the Churches. 'Tis thus that the Ministers of Christ, and in general all Christians, ought to lay themselves out, with all their Might, for the Glory of God, and Salvation of Men. III. What is here said concerning *Apollos*, of his Zeal, and his Eloquence, and of his other great Gifts, and of the extraordinary Effects of his Ministry, should make us acknowledge, that God grants a most precious Favour to the Churches, when He sends them Teachers and Ministers zealous and powerful in the holy Scriptures, and endowed with the necessary Talents

Talents and Gifts for Instruction and Edification; and it ought likewise to engage us to beseech God, that He would always raise up such like Men.

C H A P. XIX. 1, — 20.

I. *St. Paul* preaches the Gospel in the City of *Ephesus*, and does several Miracles there. II. Certain *Jews* attempting to cast out evil Spirits in the Name of *Jesus*, are ill treated by those who were possess'd with the said Spirits. III. Several Persons addicted to Magick were converted, and gave publick Tokens of their Repentance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter sets before our Eyes, the wonderful Success of *St. Paul's* Ministry in the City of *Ephesus*. That Apostle Baptized there certain Disciples, who, till then, had only been instructed in the Doctrine of *John* the Baptist; but as soon as they were Baptized in the Name of *Jesus Christ*, and *St. Paul* had laid his Hands on them, they received the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Besides these, he converted there a great Number of Persons, in spite of the Opposition of the *Jews*; he there wrought surprizing Miracles; and several People that practised the Magick Art, renounced their Superstition, and their Impiety. These are so many Proofs of the Divinity of *St. Paul's* Vocation, and of the Doctrine which he preached. To this general Observation, we may add two particular ones. The first is, upon what happened to the *Jewish* Exorcists, who, endeavouring to drive out Devils in the Name of *Jesus*, were ill treated by those whom

the wicked Spirits possess'd. This tended to convince the *Jews*, and all the World, that it was none but the Apostles, and such as believed in Christ, who were really able to work Miracles, and had Power over the unclean Spirits; and that it does not belong to wicked Men, or to Hypocrites, to take the Name of the Lord in their Mouths. The *second* relates to what is said in this Chapter, that divers People came to confess their Sins, among whom there were some, who having practised Magick, and unlawful Arts, chose rather to burn the Books treating upon those Subjects, than to sell them, tho' they would have brought them in considerable Sums. This Example is remarkable; it teaches us, that those who are truly Penitent, do not scruple to own their Faults, to give publick Tokens of their Repentance, and to renounce all that has been to themselves, or might be to others, an occasion of Sin and Scandal, tho' it be never so precious, or dear and profitable to them.

C H A P. XIX. 21,—40.

THIS is the History of a Tumult raised against St. Paul at *Ephesus*, by a Silver-smith named *Demetrius*, who made great Advantage by selling little Temples of Silver, formed after the Model of a famous Temple which was in this City, and which was devoted to a Goddess of the *Heathens*, named *Diana*, that Man finding that St. Paul, by preaching against Idols, made him lose all his profit, stirred up the People against him; but the Riot was appeased by the Secretary of the City.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to observe in general upon the Account of the Sedition which was raised at *Ephesus* against *St. Paul* is, I. That it was brought about by some Handy-crafts Men, who feared, that if the People left off worshipping Idols, their Trade would lose its credit, and their Gain be diminished; to obviate which, they made use of a Pretext of Religion and of Zeal for the Goddess *Diana*. We may see by this Example, how much the Love of Money prevails upon the Minds of Men; that it is what raises their Passions most, and is the Occasion that they cannot bear the Truth, when contradictory to their Interest. We see likewise in this History, that Men commonly cover their Passions, and their private Interest, with an appearance of Zeal, and a Pretence for Religion. This great Tumult which was raised at *Ephesus*, and which was not quieted but with difficulty, by the Secretary of that City, shews likewise, that Tumults and Seditions are very dangerous, and that they may produce fatal Consequences; that therefore we ought to avoid all that tends to promote them, and that wise Men are bound to prevent and to calm them by all possible Means. Finally, It appears by what we have read, that *St. Paul* was exposed to continual Dangers, but that God always preserv'd him from them.

C H A P. XX. 1,—16.

I. **S**T. *Paul* leaves *Ephesus*, and goes to *Troas*, where he preaches the Gospel to the Christians of that City, and raises one from the

the Dead. II. From thence he goes to *Miletus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E R E are two Things to be observed in this first Part of the *Twentieth* Chapter. I. The *first*, that *St. Paul* being arrived at *Troas*, and the Christians met together on the first Day of the Week to break Bread, that is to say, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, this Apostle attended that Meeting, and preached to them pretty late in the Night. From thence we may gather, that the Apostles and the first Christians assembled themselves to serve God, and for mutual Edification; that *Sunday* was set apart for that purpose; that the holy Supper was celebrated in those Meetings, and Discourses made for the Instruction and Exhortation of the Faithful. Thus we see plainly by this Chapter, that the Observation of *Sunday*, publick Assemblies, the Participation of the holy Supper of our Lord, and the Exhortations of the Pastors and Ministers, are of as ancient Use as Christianity it self, and of Divine Institution. II. The *second* thing which deserves our Attention is, that *St. Paul* restored Life to a young Man, who fell from the upper Room of the House where the Believers were gather'd together. This was a Miracle very remarkable. We see thereby the Confirmation of the Promises which Christ had made, when He told his Apostles and Disciples, that they should work as great Miracles as He himself had done. Wherefore this event, which, without doubt, comforted the Christians of *Troas*, and strengthen'd them in the Religion of Christ, ought to produce the same Effect in us, and convince us
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more and more of the Divinity of the Gospel, and particularly of the Doctrine of rising from the Dead.

C H A P. XX. 17,——38.

ST. *Paul* having caused the Pastors of *Ephesus* to come to *Miletus*, made them a grave and serious Exhortation before he parted from them. This Exhortation is very fine, and exceedingly pathetick, and ought to be read and meditated with great Attention.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the Discourse which St. *Paul* made to the Pastors of *Ephesus*, before he left them, we see with how great Integrity, Zeal, and Disinterestedness he had discharged his Ministry at that City for the Space of three Years ; his Constancy under Afflictions, his great Piety, the Care he took to exhort and teach, as well in Publick, as from House to House ; his settled Resolution of serving the Lord faithfully, even to the end ; of suffering every thing, and even of sacrificing his Life with Joy, for the Love of Him ; we see there also, the grave and affecting Exhortations which he made to the Ministers of *Ephesus*, protesting that he was innocent of their Blood ; and the ardent and tender Wishes, by which he recommends them to God, and the whole Church over which they were appointed. From hence the Ministers of the Gospel may learn faithfully to discharge their Office, and to fulfil the Duties thereof with Diligence, Zeal, and Sincerity, to watch carefully over the Lord's Flock, and to take heed that no false or offensive Doctrines slide in among them ; never to conceal any thing that may be
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of Use to those who are intrusted to their Care; to warn them, not only publickly, but privately also; to suffer patiently the Troubles to which they are exposed; to pray continually for their Flocks; and *Lastly*, to have no regard nor value for themselves, their own Interests, nor even their Lives, provided they may have the Satisfaction of finishing their Course, and faithfully Discharging the Ministry which they have received from the Lord *Jesus*. As for us, we must own from what we have read, that the Office of Pastors is of the greatest Importance; that God is very gracious to us when He sends us faithful Ministers; and that when they have warned and instructed us with fidelity, they will not be answerable for our Souls if we don't do our Duty. The Tears which the Pastors and Christians of *Ephesus* shed at parting with *St. Paul*, and the Grief they shewed when he told them they should see him no more, proves how dearly they loved him, and is likewise an argument how strong that Love ought to be, that unites the Pastors to their Flocks, and how much Christians should dread to be deprived of the Ministry of the faithful Servants of God.

C H A P. XXI. 1,—16.

ST. *Paul* parting from *Miletus*, arrives at *Tyre*, and from thence to *Cesarea*, where he is warned by a Prophet, that he should be imprison'd at *Jerusalem*, and deliver'd over to the *Gentiles*. This Prediction, which very much afflicted the Faithful, did not affright *St. Paul*, who shewed, that he neither feared Bonds, nor even Death; and so he set forwards for *Jerusalem*.

Reflections

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which is principally to be observed in this Reading is, I. The Prediction of *Agabus*, who warned *St. Paul* that he should be cast into Prison at *Jerusalem*, and the Effect it wrought both upon the Christians that were present, and *St. Paul* himself. This Prediction shews, that nothing befel that Apostle, but by the special Will of God ; and that it was the Lord who exposed him to those Persecutions, and who thought fit that he should be deliver'd to the *Gentiles*, and afterwards carried to *Rome*, to the end that he might bear witness to the Gospel every where. II. The Constancy and the Zeal which *St. Paul* shewed, by declaring to the Faithful, who besought him with Tears, not to go up to *Jerusalem*, that he was ready not only to be bound, but to suffer Death for the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, shews, that this faithful Servant of God was entirely devoted to Christ, and that nothing was capable of shaking his Constancy. This is an Example that ought to be imitated by all Christians, but particularly by the Ministers of the Gospel. III. The Resignation which the Believers testified for the Will of the Lord, by no longer opposing *St. Paul's* Journey, should likewise serve for an Example to us, teaching us to submit to all that God pleases, as soon as He manifests his Will to us, and always to say, *Let the Will of the Lord be done.*

C H A P. XXI. 17,—40.

I. **S**T. *Paul* being arrived at *Jerusalem*, goes into the Temple with four other Persons, who, as well as he, had made the Vow of
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Nazareth, to the end that he might observe what was ordered by the Law of *Moses*, in the like Cases. II. Though he did it by the advice of the other Apostles, to shew that he was not an Enemy of the Law, as he had been accused; the *Jews* did nevertheless raise a Tumult against him, charging him falsely with having profaned the Temple, and brought *Gentiles* into it; and they would have put him to Death, if the Captain of those that Guarded the Temple, had not rescued him out of their Hands.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE RE are *Three* things to be considered upon what we have here read: I. What *St. Paul* did, when he went to the Temple of *Jerusalem*, and purified himself, according to the Custom of the *Jews*, must be looked upon as an Act of Prudence and Charity, and which tended to disprove the Accusation that he was an Enemy to the Law of *Moses*. This behaviour of *St. Paul*, teaches us to accommodate our selves as much as we can, and to comply especially in indifferent Matters, with those who are prejudiced against us, and to neglect nothing to bring them off from their wrong Notions. II. That notwithstanding what *St. Paul* did to undeceive the *Jews*, they rose up against him in such a manner, as to endeavour to take away his Life. These are the common effects of Passion and Prejudice; they do so blind the Eye of those whom they possess, that nothing can undeceive them. III. And *Lastly*, it is to be observed, that Providence delivered *St. Paul* from the Rage of the *Jews*, by the Means of the Tribune, making Use, at the same Time, of what this Apostle had done, in Compliance with

with the *Jews*, to cause him to be seized and delivered by that very People, into the Hands of the Gentiles, as had been foretold. Thus God secures those that serve Him, and all that Men do against 'em, tends only to accomplish the ends of Providence.

C H A P. XXII.

I. **T**HIS is a Discourse, in which *St. Paul*, to justify himself from the Accusation of the *Jews*, that he was an Enemy to their Law and Nation, gives the History of his Life and Conversion. II. But the *Jews* pressing that he should be put to Death, the Captain ordered that he should be examined by Scourging, which however was not done, because this Apostle declared that he was a Citizen of *Rome*; but he was sent back, that he might appear before the Council of the *Jews*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Design of *St. Paul's* Discourse, which is here related, was to shew the *Jews* he was no Enemy to their Religion, as they pretended; that, so far from it, he himself had been very zealous for that Religion in which he was brought up at *Jerusalem*, insomuch that he was formerly a most violent Persecutor of the Christians; but if he had embraced the Religion of Christ, and if he had preached it every where, he did it to obey the Calling which the Lord made to him out of Heaven. In this Behaviour of *St. Paul* towards the *Jews* we may observe, that he endeavoured both to justify himself, and to pacify them, but that he did not however dissemble the Truth. This teaches us to speak, and act always with Temper and Prudence,

dence, when we have to do with Persons prejudiced against us, and at the same time, with Courage and Firmness, without ever using Disguises, and without dissembling the Truth through Fear. The Rage and Passion, into which the *Jews* fell, when *St. Paul* said, that the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles, shews that the chief Cause of their Hatred against this Apostle, was the aversion they had to the Heathens. This Procedure of the *Jews* shews likewise, that nothing can undeceive People who labour under strong Prejudices. Lastly, *St. Luke* teaches us, that *St. Paul* being upon the point of undergoing an Examination by Scourging, thought fit, upon this Occasion, to make Use of his Privilege as a Citizen of *Rome*; he did it, because it was a lawful Means of securing himself against the Violence and Injustice they were going to do him; from whence we may conclude, that it is lawful to make Use of our Right, and to employ all just and reasonable Methods to defend our selves, when we are in Danger of being Oppressed or Wronged.

C H A P. XXIII.

THIS Chapter consists of *Two* Parts. We see, I. What passed when *St. Paul* appeared before the Council of the *Jews*. II. The Relation of a Conspiracy, which forty *Jews* had formed to take away this Apostle's Life, and the manner in which he was preserved.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may make four Reflexions upon this Chapter. I. That *St. Paul* being unjustly Struck, by the order of the high Priest *Ananias*, he threatned him with the Judgment of God, but

but that he nevertheless declared the respect he bore to his Character, when he was acquainted, that he who had caused him to be thus struck, was the High Priest, which he did not know at first. What we are to learn from thence is, that we ought to speak respectfully of our Superiors; and at the same Time, that God will punish unjust Judges, and such as abuse their Authority. II. That *St. Paul* occasioned a division between the *Pharises* and *Sadducees*, by saying, that he was Arraigned for Believing the Resurrection of the Dead. He acted wisely therein, to the end, that he might not be oppressed by the *Jews*, and to shew that he taught that which the *Jews* and *Pharisees* themselves believed concerning the Resurrection. III. *St. Luke* informs us here, that God appeared to *St. Paul* by Night, and bid him fear nothing, but to be prepared to go, and bear Witness to the Truth at *Rome*. This was necessary for the support of the Apostle, in the midst of those troubles which the *Jews* excited against him, to instruct him in the Designs of Providence, and to encourage him to make every where an open Profession of his Faith. IV. We see in the last Place, that forty *Jews* having conspired to slay *St. Paul*, he was preserved from that Danger by a young Man, his Nephew, who gave the Captain Notice thereof. We may observe from thence, how great the Rage of the *Jews* was against *St. Paul*, and to what Excesses Hatred, joyned with a false Zeal for Religion, is capable of hurrying Men. 'Tis moreover, a Lesson for us to avoid rash Oaths and Vows. Finally, we may admire, in this event, the Means that Providence uses to preserve innocent and good Men from impending Dangers.

C H A P. XXIV.

I. **S**T. *Paul* being accused by the *Jews*, before the Governour *Felix*, gives an Account of his Behaviour and his Faith. II. *Felix* having afterwards desired to hear St. *Paul*, that Apostle discoursed of the Duties of Justice, of Temperance, and the last Judgment, in such a manner, as filled him with Terror. However, St *Paul* remained a Prisoner at *Cesarea*, for the space of two Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we are to consider first upon this Chapter is, that St. *Paul* being very unjustly accused by the *Jews*, before the Governour *Felix*, defended himself by a Discourse full of Strength and Weight; in which, whilst he justifies himself from the Accusations brought against him, and whilst he denies those things which the *Jews* falsely laid to his Charge, he does nevertheless make an open Confession of the Faith and Doctrine which he taught. We may learn from this Instance of Sincerity and Zeal, that neither Fear, nor any other Consideration, ought to hinder us from asserting the Truth. II. We should in the next Place, seriously observe the Terror, with which *Felix* was seized, when St. *Paul* talked to him about Righteousness, Temperance, and the great Judgment Day; as well as the Obdurateness of that Governour, who finding himself reproached by his own Conscience, with Unjustice, Impurity, and several other Crimes, would not suffer the Apostle to proceed. Here we see the Power of the Word of God, and the Effects which the Truths of the Gospel, and especially the Doctrine of the Universal Judgment, produce, even upon

upon the Minds of the Wicked. But we likewise observe, how Sinners resist that Word, and the Motions of their own Conscience. This should therefore be a warning to us, not to harden our Hearts, nor ever to delay our Conversion, when God causes us to hear his Voice, and when we feel our selves affected therewith. The naughtiness of *Felix* appeared yet farther, by his leaving *St. Paul* Imprisoned; not that he thought him guilty, but because he was Covetous, and hoped to extort Money from him, and out of Complaisance to the *Jews*. Thus Avarice, and Respect for Men, are the causes of great Unjustice, and continual obstacles to the attaining the Knowledge of the Truth.

C H A P. XXV.

I. **T**HE *Jews* desire *Festus*, who succeeded *Felix* in the Government of *Judea*, to send *St. Paul* from *Cesarea*, where he was a Prisoner, to *Jerusalem*, having formed a Design to Kill him on the Way; but *Festus* did not grant them their Request, telling them, they might come to *Cesarea*, which they did. Thereupon, *St. Paul* appealed to the Emperor, and *Festus* resolved to send him to *Rome*. II. About this time King *Agrippa* arriving at *Cesarea*, and having heard of *St. Paul*, was desirous to see and hear him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may have observed in this Chapter; I. That the *Jews* having plotted to Assassinate *St. Paul*, God did not suffer them to execute that wicked and cruel Design: Here we continue to observe, the Protection with which

God shields his faithful Servants. II. *St. Luke* relates farther, how *St. Paul* being accused by the *Jews*, of several great Crimes before *Festus*, went on in maintaining his Innocence, and in requesting that his Cause might be referred to the Emperor. This procedure of the Apostle shews that when we are unjustly accused, it is allowable to have recourse to the Tribunals or Courts of Justice, and to make Use of all the lawful Means we can, for our Defence; but it must be likewise considered, that Providence did thus dispose matters, not only that *St. Paul* might not fall into the Hands of the *Jews*, but also that he might thereby have an opportunity of going to *Rome*, and of Preaching the Gospel in that great City, as our Lord had foretold he should. III. The Behaviour of *Festus* towards *St. Paul*, shews that that Governour, though a Heathen, had more Integrity and Equity than the *Jews*, and even than the High Priests, and Magistrates of *Jerusalem* themselves. IV. Lastly, 'tis to be observed, that King *Agrippa* coming at that time to *Cesarea*, was desirous to see and hear *St. Paul*, and that this was an Occasion with which Providence furnished this Apostle, to speak in the Presence of that Prince, and a great number of People, of the first Rank; which turned to the Justification of *St. Paul*, and the Doctrine he Preached, as we shall see in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XXVI.

I. *St. Paul* speaking in the Presence of King *Agrippa*, of *Bernice*, of the Governour *Festus*, and a great number of Officers, and People of Distinction, gives the History of his Life, Conversion, and Manner of exercising

exercising his Ministry, down to that time. II. He was interrupted by *Festus*, who reproached him with Madness ; and by King *Agrippa*, who was moved by his Discourse. III. Finally, this Prince, the Governour, and all that were present, acknowledged the Innocence of *St. Paul* ; but it was resolved that he should be sent to *Rome*, because he had appealed to the Emperor.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N the Discourse *St. Paul* made before King *Agrippa*, to give an Account of the Conduct he had observed, both before and after his Conversion, we may discover a Character of Wisdom, of Moderation, and at the same time, of Ingenuity, Steadiness and Courage, which very plainly denote the Innocence and Zeal of this Apostle. The soft and respectful, but at the same time frank and sincere manner, in which he spoke upon this Occasion, should teach us to answer always as we are exhorted by *St. Peter*, with Meekness and Humility, to those who require an Account of our Faith, and of the hope which is in us, and never to conceal nor dissemble the Truth. II. We are to consider upon this Discourse, that though *St. Paul* persecuted the Church before his Conversion, he did it in Ignorance and Unbelief, but that otherwise, his Life was irreproachable ; and that after the Lord had called him, he served him with great Zeal. What we are to learn from thence is, that Sins of Ignorance are more easily pardoned than others, and that we are likewise, more easily reclaimed from them ; that God reveals Himself, sooner or later, to such as are of an upright Heart ; and that, whenever he calls us, we ought to obey.

and follow that Call immediately. III. We see by the Judgment *Festus* made of *Paul*, in taking him for a mad-Man, that the truest and most serious Things seem Folly to the Worldly-minded; and the wise and respectful Answer which *St. Paul* returned to *Festus*, is a noble Instance of Moderation. IV. Upon what King *Agrippa* said to *St. Paul*, that he had almost persuaded him to be a Christian, and upon the Answer *St. Paul* returned him, it may be observed, that that Prince, who professed the Jewish Religion, was struck with the Discourse of the Apostle, and that he found in it a probability at least, by which we may see the Force of Truth; but it likewise appears, that the Impression was not to Salvation, since *Agrippa* took no care to be farther instructed therein. It is in vain to be but faintly affected with the Word of God, or to be a half Christian, we must be so altogether, and with our whole Heart. Lastly, We find that King *Agrippa* and *Festus* owned *St. Paul's* Innocency. Thus it was, that what our Lord had foretold the Apostles was fulfilled; namely, that they should be brought before Kings and Rulers, to bear witness of Him; but that He would assist them with his Spirit, and put into their Mouth what should be necessary for them to speak.

C H A P. XXVII.

THIS Chapter contains a Relation of the Voyage which *St. Paul* made by Sea from *Cesarea* to *Rome*, where what is chiefly to be observed is, that he was in danger of Perishing, the Ship in which he was having run a ground.

Reflections

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS History presents us with four Remarks. I. The *first* relates the continual Dangers *St. Paul* underwent, since that after having escaped the Rage of the *Jews*, he had like to have been cast away in his Voyage to *Rome*, and besides, to be murder'd by the Soldiers. II. The *second* is, that God, who had protected him till then, was pleased to deliver him from both those Dangers. We see thereby, that nothing can hurt those whom God favours with his Protection, and who serve him faithfully. The *third*, that God did not only save the Life of *St. Paul*, but for his sake preserved all those that were in the Ship with him, so that when it split, there was not one lost. This wonderful Deliverance, which *St. Paul* foretold, was capable of convincing them, that this Apostle was a true Servant of God; and it is a Lesson to us, that it is always a great Happiness to be in the Company of good Men, and that upon their Account God often spares the rest, granting them Deliverance, and shewing them great Favour. IV. It is to be observed in the last Place, that tho' God had assured *St. Paul* by an Angel, that none of those who were embark'd with him should perish; yet that Apostle declared, that if the Mariners did not remain in the Vessel, they could not be saved. The Promises which God makes us, should not hinder us from using those Means that Providence prescribes, and which He himself has established, wherefore our Reliance upon God ought never to be attended with Rashness or Negligence.

C H A P. XXVIII.

WE see here, I. That *St. Paul* having been Shipwrack'd upon the Coast of the Isle of *Maltha*, he staid there three Months, and wrought sundry Miracles. II. His departure from *Maltha*, and his arrival at *Rome*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Humanity which the Inhabitants of *Maltha* shew'd *St. Paul*, and those which were shipwrack'd with him, should teach Christians to exercise Hospitality, and heartily to assist those that are in Distress. The Judgment which the People of that Island passed upon *St. Paul*, when he was bit by a Viper, shews, that Men, and even the most barbarous People themselves, have always thought that Divine Vengeance does not suffer Crimes to go unpunished, which is a most certain Truth; however, the Example of *St. Paul* proves, that it would be judging rashly, to imagine that all those whom any Misfortune befalls, are pursued by the Justice of God. The Opinion which the Inhabitants of *Maltha* conceived of *St. Paul*, taking him for a God, when they saw he was not hurt, must be look'd upon as an effect of the Ignorance of those Idolatrous People; but this Miracle, as well as that of curing the Father in Law of *Publius*, and other distemper'd Persons of that Island, obliges us to acknowledge the Accomplishment of that Promise which Christ made his Apostles in the xvith Chapter and 18th Verse of the Gospel of *St. Mark*: They shall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay Hands on the Sick, and they shall recover. *St. Luke* tells us, Lastly,

Lastly, That *St. Paul* being arrived at *Rome*, saw not only the *Christians* that were in that great City, but likewise the *Jews*, whom he inform'd of the Reasons that induced him to take a Voyage to *Rome*, and to appeal to the Emperor; that he spoke of their Nation, and of the *Jews* at *Jerusalem*, with great Temper; that he afterwards endeavour'd to bring them to believe in *Jesus Christ*; and finding at last that several among them continued in their Unbelief, he declar'd to them, that because of their Obdurateness, he would preach the Gospel to the *Gentiles*. This his Behaviour, full of Wisdom and Charity, shews, that we ought to omit nothing that may edifie the World, or bring back those who are prejudiced against the Truth; and that if then People will continue obstinate, they are inexcusable.

Thus ends the History of *St. Luke*, and the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*. It may be farther observed, that *St. Paul* remained a Prisoner at *Rome* two Years; that during that time, he writ several Epistles, which have been preserved to this Age; that he was afterwards set at liberty, and made several Journeys; and that returning to *Rome* about eight Years after, he there suffer'd Martyrdom, being Beheaded in the Reign of *Nero*.

ROMANS.



ROMANS.



CHAP. I.



THE Epistle to the *Romans* was writ about the Fifty third Year of our Lord. 'Twas placed at the Head of the other Epistles, because of the Importance of the Matters contained in it, and the Dignity of the City of *Rome*. The Design of this Epistle is to shew, that all Men, as well *Jews* as *Gentiles*, that would believe in *Jesus Christ*, should be saved; and that Circumcision, and the Works of the Law of *Moses*, gave no advantage to the *Jews*, any more than to the *Gentiles*. This is what we are taught in the Eleven first Chapters of this Epistle. In the five last, *St. Paul* exhorts the *Romans* to the principal Duties of the Christian Life, and especially to Charity, Forbearance, and Peace, forasmuch as the Divisions which prevailed at that time be-

between the *Jews* and the converted *Gentiles*, troubled the Peace of the Church.

In this first Chapter, *St. Paul* does two Things. I. He salutes the Believers at *Rome*, and testifies the Joy he felt in Hearing of their Faith, and the great Desire he had to go and see them. II. He begins to shew, that all Men being Sinners, they could not be saved but by *Jesus Christ*; and for that purpose he makes appear, that tho' God had revealed himself to the *Gentiles* by the Works of the Creation, they did not serve Him, but fell into Idolatry, and all Kinds of Disorders.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may observe from the very Beginning of this Epistle, the Love of *St. Paul* to the *Romans*, the Desire he had to contribute towards their Edification, and the Zeal he was filled with, to make known the Gospel in all Places, and all Kinds of Persons, and even in the City of *Rome*. All Christians, and particularly Ministers of the Gospel, ought to imitate *St. Paul* in this respect; to love tenderly the Church of Christ and the Faithful; to pray continually for them; to procure their Edification with all their Might, and never to be ashamed of Truth or Godliness. II. We see, that although God manifested Himself to the *Gentiles* by the Works of the Creation, and Providence, they did not render Him the Glory, but abandoned themselves to all sort of Sins. We may thereby observe, how guilty we should be, if, God having made known himself to us, not only by the Works of Nature, but by his Word, we did not serve Him as we ought. III. What the Apostle says in this Chapter,

Chapter, with respect to the two principal Sins of the *Gentiles*, which were Idolatry, and the dreadful Disorders in which they were involved with respect to Uncleaness, shews us in what Condition we should be, if God had not enlighten'd us with the Light of the Gospel, and in what horrid Actions Sensuality and Uncleaness may engage Mankind. IV. *Finally*, We see in the last Verses of this Chapter, the Picture St. Paul draws of the Vices and Manners of the *Heathen*, by saying, that they were filled with Pollutions, Covetousness, Injustice, and all kinds of Passions and Sins; and that although they knew that those who did such Things were worthy of Death, they did not forbear committing them. We must own to our shame, that this is the Picture of the Lives and Manners of a great Number of Christians; but it likewise teaches us, that they who thus imitate the *Heathens* in their Disorders, and who know much better than they the Law of God and his Will, must expect his severest Judgments.

C H A P. II.

I. ST. Paul having shewn in the foregoing Chapter, that the *Gentiles* were Sinners, proves in this, that the *Jews*, who condemned the *Gentiles*, were Sinners also; and by abusing their Lights, and the Goodness of God, they would appear much more guilty before his Tribunal than the *Gentiles*, who knew no other Law but that of Nature and Conscience. II. He represents, that it was in vain for them to boast of being *Jews*, and of having the Law of God, and Circumcision, whilst they did not observe that Law; and he declares to them, that all these external Advantages, which distinguished

tinguished them from the *Gentiles*, did not render them more acceptable to God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Design of this Chapter in general is, to shew that the *Jews* were guilty before God, as much, and even more than the *Gentiles*, and consequently, that they could not be justified nor saved but by *Jesus Christ*. Besides which, we may gather from this Chapter the following Instructions: I. That those who condemn Sin in others, and do nevertheless commit the like, will be inexcusable, and shall not escape the Judgment of God. II. That God uses great Forbearance towards Sinners, in order to bring them to Repentance; and that those who abuse such Forbearance, draw upon themselves the most terrible Effects of his Wrath. III. That God will render one Day to Men according to their Works; that he will give everlasting Life to those who have persevered in doing well; but that Affliction and Despair will be the Portion of the Wicked. IV. That at the Day of Judgment, Men will be judged according to the Degree of Knowledge which they shall have had; that the *Gentiles* will be judged by the Law of Nature; but that the Punishment of those, who shall have sinned against the Law that God has given them in his Word, will be much more rigorous; by which we may see, what Christians are to expect, who sin against the Light of the Gospel. V. And Lastly, we may see in this Chapter, that the *Jews* boasted that they were more Knowing than the *Gentiles*, and valued themselves upon having the Circumcision; but that nevertheless St. Paul declared to them, that Circumcision, and other Privileges which they enjoyed,

joyed, were of no use to them, and that they would be treated as *Gentiles* and *Uncircumcised*. This teaches us, that we ought not to boast of our knowing the Will of God, of our being in his Covenant, and of having the external Tokens, unless we do his Will; that he is not a Christian, who is only so outwardly; and that none shall be esteemed Christians, but such as are so inwardly, and in the Heart, and who are praised and approved, not by Men, but by the Lord himself.

C H A P. III.

ST. Paul shews three Things in this Chapter. I. That the *Jews* had great Advantages over the *Gentiles*, but that if they did not believe in *Jesus Christ*, that would not hinder God from being always true in his Promises, nor them from being punished righteously; that for the rest, tho' the Unbelief of the *Jews* served to manifest the Righteousness, Truth, and Goodness of God, yet they would nevertheless be wholly inexcusable. II. St. Paul proves by several Texts of the Old Testament, that the *Jews* were guilty of the Violation of the Law of God, and he takes notice, that those Texts did only relate to the *Jews*. III. He concludes from thence, that the *Jews* could not have been justified by the Law of *Moses*, and that there was but one only Way of being justified for them, as well as for the *Gentiles*, which was Faith in *Jesus Christ*; and he says, that this Doctrine was so far from being opposite to the Law, that, on the contrary, it establish'd it more strongly.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Doctrine which *St. Paul* teaches throughout this Chapter, and which he designs to prove, is, that since the *Jews* were involved in Sin, and in the Guilt thereof, as well as the *Gentiles*, they could not pretend to be justified by the Law of *Moses*, and that there was but one only Means of Justification for both, *viz.* Faith in *Jesus Christ*, who has made an Attonement for the Sins of all Mankind. Let us carefully retain this Doctrine, which is the Foundation and Sum of the whole Christian Religion. There are moreover three particular Remarks to be made upon this Chapter. I. That as the Privileges which the *Jews* enjoyed, were of no benefit to them, by reason of their Unbelief; so likewise the Advantages which God has granted to us Christians, will be useless to us, if we abuse them, and will not secure us from his Judgment. II. That the Infidelity and Ingratitude of Men, do not lessen the Righteousness of God, when he punishes them; that such Infidelity does even help to shew, that God is Righteous, Good, and True; but that nevertheless, we must not think that God cannot condemn Sinners with justice, because Sin serves to manifest his Glory; for tho' that should happen, it is only accidental; the Aim and Design of the Wicked tending by no means to advance that Glory. What the Apostle says upon this Occasion, proves likewise, that we must never do Evil, under a Pretence that Good may follow. III. And Lastly, it appears by the last Verses of this Chapter, that the Intention of *St. Paul*, in what he here teaches, was not to abolish the Law, or to render it vain; nor ought we from thence to infer,

fer, that Christians are allowed to continue in Sin; but, on the contrary, that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith is, at the Bottom, the same with that of the Law and the Prophets; and that the said Doctrine is so far from dispensing with the Duties of Holiness, that it carries Men more strongly towards them, as will be shewn by the Apostle in the following Chapters.

C H A P. IV.

TH E Apostle proves in this Chapter, by the Example of the Patriarch *Abraham*, that Men are justified by Faith, and not by Circumcision, nor by the Works of the Law of *Moses*. Accordingly he observes, I. That *Abraham* himself was justified by his Faith, and that he received the Promises of God before he was circumcised. II. He represents in the next Place, what was the Virtue and Efficacy of *Abraham's* Faith, and exhorts the *Romans* to imitate the same.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, I. What Justification is, and how we may partake of it. He shews, that Justification, and the Happiness of a Sinner, consists in the Pardon of Sin, which God grants to Mankind out of his pure Mercy; and affirms, that this Favour is obtained by Faith in Christ, and not by Works of the Law of *Moses*. This he proves clearly, by observing, that the Scripture says, that *Abraham* was justified by his Faith, and the Promises were made to his Posterity long before he was Circumcised. From whence it follows, that it was not the Circumcision, but Faith, that

that render'd him acceptable to God; that therefore Circumcision was not necessary to Salvation; and all those who imitate the Faith of this Patriarch, will be accounted his Children and Posterity, and justified as he was. II. But this is an invincible Proof, that 'tis impossible to be justified, and obtain Salvation, if our Faith be not like that of *Abraham's*, and our Faith in God and his Promises be not efficacious and active, and does not induce us to expect every thing from Him, to hope firmly for what He has promised us, and obey Him even in the most difficult Matters, as did this holy Patriarch. This is a most important Doctrine, which we ought to comprehend well, and carefully remember, and which should serve for a Rule to our Thoughts, and to our Actions, if we desire to attain Salvation.

C H A P. V.

THIS Chapter consists of three Parts. I. St. *Paul* describes the Fruits of Justification, and the admirable Effects which Faith, and a Conviction of the Love of God, produceth in Believers. II. He represents the Greatness of that Love which God has manifested for Men, by giving his Son to die for them. III. He shews, that Christ alone is the Fountain of all these precious Advantages; in which View, he compares Christ with *Adam*, and shews, that if *Adam* had subjected all Men without exception to Sin and to Death, even those that lived before *Moses*, and to whom God had not given a positive and revealed Law, as He did to *Adam*; much more ought we to believe, that the Mercy of God should extend it self to all Mankind by *Jesus Christ*; from whence

he concludes, that our Lord is the Author of Salvation, and of Life, to all such as truly believe in Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may observe by the Reading of this Chapter, I. The happy Condition of true Believers, since being justified by Faith, they have such firm Persuasions, and such sweet and lively Sentiments of the Love of God, that they rejoice continually in the Expectation of the Glory of Heaven, even in the midst of their greatest Tribulations. II. We ought seriously to meditate upon what is here said concerning the great Love that God has shewn to us sinful Men, by delivering up his Son to die for us, and which He bears particularly to those that are reconciled to Him, and believe the Gospel sincerely. This Consideration affords us powerful Motives to shew our Gratitude towards God, and to confirm us more and more in his Love. III. The Comparison St. Paul makes in this Chapter between *Adam* and *CHRIST*, tends to shew, that our Lord came to deliver Man from Sin and Death, to which they were all made liable by the Fall of *Adam*. This ought to make us look upon Christ, as Him in whom we find a Deliverance from all our Evils, and who is the Giver of Spiritual and Eternal Life to all such as believe in Him. But it likewise appears from hence, that 'tis none but those who have a Share in the Righteousness and Life of Christ that can obtain Salvation ; and that such as don't receive Him with a true Faith, and who imitate *Adam* in his Disobedience, do remain in Condemnation and in Death.

C H A P VI.

THE Design of *St. Paul* in this Chapter, is to shew, I. That the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, which he has taught in the foregoing Chapters, does by no means authorize Christians to live in Sin, but, on the contrary, does powerfully draw them from it. II. He shews in the same View, that we ought to be so far from Sinning, upon the pretext that we are no longer under the Law, but under Grace, that it is Grace which delivers us from the Slavery and Bondage of Sin, rendering us the Servants of God, and causing us to live in Righteousness and Holiness.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought seriously to meditate on the Doctrine *St. Paul* here teaches us ; it amounts to this : That we should not think, that because we are delivered from our Sins by Christ, we are allowed to live in Sin ; that, far from it, the Baptism which we have received, and the Belief in Christ's Death and Resurrection, oblige us in the strongest manner to renounce Sin, and to lead a spiritual Life, in imitation of that of our Saviour ; that it would be a thing highly unworthy of our Calling, and of the Condition of Christians, if Sin should reign in us, and if we should suffer our selves to be carried away by the inordinate desires of the Flesh. But that we ought much rather to cleave to God, and employ our Bodies and Souls in his Service, and for his Glory. II. It is likewise of Importance carefully to attend to what *St. Paul* declares so strongly and positively : That it would be an abuse of the Doctrine of Grace,

and a great Affront to Christ and his Gospel, to fancy that we may Sin without fear, upon pretext that we are no longer under the Law, but under Grace; that, on the contrary, the effect which Grace ought to produce, and the Design for which it is given to us, is to release us from the shameful Bondage of Sin, and to make us submit our selves to God and to Righteousness, and cause us to bring forth the Fruits of Sanctification, to the end that we may obtain everlasting Life. These are Truths of very great Weight, let us carefully retain them, and often read this Sixth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* for that Purpose.

C H A P. VII.

THE Apostle having taught in the preceding Chapters, that we must not think, that Christians are allowed to live in Sin, on pretence that they are not under the Law, but under Grace; and, on the contrary, that it is for this very Reason, that Sin ought no longer to reign in them, he confirms the said Doctrine in this Chapter, and shews, I. That we are not under the Law; but that as a Woman is at Liberty to Marry again, when her Husband is Dead, so Christians may forsake the Law of *Moses*, to cleave to that of Jesus Christ. II. He shews next, that this Change was very advantageous to them, since they were thereby in a condition to produce the Fruits of Holiness, and to serve God with a new Spirit. III. That he might the better explain his thoughts, he says, that the Law was Holy and Good, that it was not the cause of Sin; but that it had not the same Efficacy as the Gospel, to sanctifie Men, and to free them from Corruption. 'Tis in this View, that the Apostle represents by his
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own Person the State of a Man that lives under the Law, and who is in Subjection to Sin and Death; and he renders thanks to God, for having delivered him from that Condition, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Chapter which ought to be well understood, and which must not be misapplied. The Design of *St. Paul*, is to teach thereby, that the Doctrine of Grace tends to sanctifie Men, as he had established it in the preceeding Chapter. Thus when he makes mention of a *carnal Man sold to Sin*, in whom there is not any Good, who is a Slave to the Law of Sin, who does not do the good which he approves, but who commits the Evil he disapproves; it must not be thought that he had a Mind thereby to describe the Condition of a Regenerate Man, and of a Christian that partakes of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; for the Apostle says in this very Chapter, that Christians are delivered from this State of Sin and of Condemnation, to bear Fruits for God, and serve him with a new Heart; and we are taught in the following Chapter, that Believers are no longer under the Bondage of the Flesh and of Sin, but that they have been set free from them by Jesus Christ our Lord. But *St. Paul* designed to represent in his own Person, the Condition of a Man, who is under the Law, and who not having Faith and the Spirit of Christ, is a Slave to his Passions. The Doctrine of the Apostle amounts therefore to this: That the Gospel does not allow us to live in Sin; that the Law had not the same efficacy as the Gospel, to deliver Men from their Corruption, and to Sanctifie them; and therefore that the Doctrine of

Justification by Faith, very far from indulging Men in the Liberty of Sinning, tends to render them Holy, and to free them from the Slavery of their Passions. From whence it follows, that those who are still engaged in this Slavery, and in whom the Desires of the Flesh prevail, have not a true Faith.

C H A P. VIII. 1, — 17.

I. **S**T. *Paul* shews that Christians are no longer in Bondage to Condemnation and to Sin, like those who are under the Law; and that they do not Govern themselves by the Motions of the Flesh, but by those of the Spirit of God. II. He represents next to the *Romans*, that they were under an indispensable Obligation to live not according to the Flesh, but according to the Spirit, and to behave themselves as the Children of God, and Heirs of his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Instructions which the first Part of this Chapter affords us are, I. That the Condition of true Believers is very happy, since there is no more Condemnation for them, and since they are delivered from Sin and Death, by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Power of his Death, his Gospel, and his Spirit. II. That the true and surest token by which we may discover those that belong to Christ is, that they don't live according to the Flesh, but mortifie the Lusts thereof; that they set their Hearts upon spiritual Things, and follow the Motions of the Spirit of God, throughout their whole Behaviour. St. *Paul* tells us most expressly, that these are Duties absolutely in-

indispensable. He declares farther, that those who have not the Spirit of Christ, do not belong to him in any Manner; that those who live in Sin, and according to the Flesh, cannot be acceptable to God, but involve themselves in Death; whereas those who labour to mortifie the Works of the Body, do partake of spiritual Life; that they will one Day attain, by means of the Resurrection, to everlasting Bliss, and to the Possession of the Inheritance which God reserves for all his Children. Let us carefully remember these Instructions: Let us reflect on them continually, to the end, that they may inspire us with a Behaviour, and with sentiments worthy of the Title we bear of the Redeemed of Christ, of Children of God, and Heirs of his Kingdom.

C H A P. VIII. 18,—38.

THIS is the Design of what we are about to read. *St. Paul* has a mind to shew, that the Afflictions of Christians do not hinder their Reconciliation with God. I. It is therefore in this View, he says that all the Creatures, that is, all the Faithful, and even the Apostles, and those who first believed in Jesus Christ, and received the Holy Ghost in an abundant Measure, underwent great Evils; but that however they waited with a firm Hope for the manifestation of the Glory of the Children of God. II. *St. Paul* adds, that God supported them by his Spirit, in the midst of their sorest Distresses, that He heard their Prayers, that their Afflictions were so far from being hurtful to them, that they contributed to their Happiness, since God had decreed, that the Faithful should arrive at Glory through Sufferings, after the Example of Jesus Christ. III. From all this the Apostle

infers,

infers, that the Salvation of those who love God, and who are Elected in Christ, is certain ; and that God having given them his own Son, who died, and interceeds for them in Heaven, no Creature nor no Evil can harm them, nor hinder them from attaining everlasting Happiness.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read teacheth us, I. That the Troubles and Evils of this Life, are not to be compared with heavenly Glory, and that these Evils are so far from being Obstacles to the Happiness of God's Children, that they contribute towards it, and that in general, all things concur for Good to those that love God. II. St. *Paul* shews us, that the Faithful, and those that God loves most, do sigh and groan, in expectation of this great Glory, which God has reserved for them ; but that nevertheless, God supports and comforts them in their Conflicts by his Spirit, and that He even makes Use of Afflictions to lead them to Glory, and make them conformable to Jesus Christ. III. The Apostle tells us, that God will infallibly Glorifie all the Elect ; that having given them his Son, He will therewith grant them every thing that is necessary ; that the Death of Christ, his Entrance into Heaven, and his Intercession, ought to fill them with a firm Trust in the midst of their hardest Trials ; and that there is no Creature, either in Heaven, or upon Earth, that can separate them from the Love of God. This is a Doctrine full of great Comfort for the true Children of God, and very proper to support them in their Afflictions, to fill them with Joy, Hope,
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and Confidence, and to confirm them more and more in the Love of God and his Holiness.

C H A P. IX.

I. **S**T. *Paul* declares in the beginning of this Chapter, that altho' he had taught, that the *Gentiles* would partake of the Grace of God as well as the *Jews*, yet he had such a tender Concern for the latter, because they were the People of God, as even to be willing to devote himself to Death, and to be used like the worst of Men, if that might be of any Benefit to the *Jews*. II. He shews next, by the Example of *Isaac*, whom God preferr'd to *Ishmael*, who was also the Son of *Abraham*; and by the Example of *Jacob*, who was chosen before *Esau*, although both had the same Father and Mother, and were Twins, that all those who are descended from these Patriarchs, are not consider'd as their Posterity, nor comprehended in the Divine Covenant. III. St. *Paul* lays down farther, that God may admit into his Covenant, and choose for Salvation, those whom he thinks fit; and that Men have no reason to complain, because He is free in the Distribution of his Favours, and because He does nothing but with Justice, and even with Goodness. IV. Lastly, He concludes from what he has said, that God might have called the *Gentiles* to Salvation; which he confirms by the Oracles of the Prophets, who had plainly foretold the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Rejection of the *Jews*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Abstract and Substance of this Chapter, which treats of Predestination, is, that God, who is the Master of all Things, and who is perfectly just, and supremely Good, may impart his Favours to whom He pleases, and that Men have no reason to complain thereof; that accordingly, He might have decreed Salvation to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*, and even justly reject the *Jews* because of their Unbelief, as the Prophets expressly foretold. This Doctrine obliges us to praise the Mercy of the Lord, who has vouchsafed to call us to his Covenant, us, who were originally *Gentiles*, and to acknowledge, that if we be chosen for Salvation, 'tis wholly owing to the Favour of God. We are to consider in the next Place, that as all those who descended from *Abraham* did not partake in the Promises of God, and that even the *Jews*, to whom these Promises were made, have been cast off by reason of their Unbelief, notwithstanding the Privileges of their Calling; so the Advantages of the Divine Covenant will become useless to us, if we do not make suitable Returns to the Goodness which God has shewn us, and if we exclude our selves from Salvation by our Ingratitude and Unbelief.

C H A P. X.

I. **S**T. *Paul* continues to treat of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and Calling of the *Gentiles*, and shews, that the *Jews* were rejected because they placed their Righteousness in the Law of *Moses*, not observing that that Law lead them to *Jesus Christ*. **II.** He shews next by the Words of *Moses*, that Faith is a much more
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easy Means of being justified before God, than the Law was, and that this Means of obtaining Salvation, consists in believing heartily in *Jesus Christ*, and in making a publick Profession of his Doctrine. III. He adds, that this Salvation was offer'd to all Men, by the Preaching of the Gospel ; and proves from out of the Prophets, and particularly from *Moses* and *Isaiah*, that the *Gentiles* were to be called, and that the *Jews* should be rejected, because of their Hardness and Unbelief.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That there is no other Means of Attaining to Salvation, but that which is offered to us in *Jesus Christ*, and that those who seek for other Means besides, cannot be saved. II. That the Way which the Gospel prescribes for Justification, has nothing in it beyond our Power, or which is not even very easy, and that therefore we should be inexcusable if we don't lay hold of so precious an Advantage. III. St. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, that in order to be saved, we must believe in *Jesus Christ* with our Heart, and confess Him with our Mouth ; which shews, that a sincere Faith, and a publick Profession of the Gospel, is absolutely necessary to Salvation. IV. He teaches us moreover, that God was pleased to offer Salvation to all Mankind by the Gospel ; that Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and to the end that this Word may be heard, there must be Persons sent to Preach it. We may observe thereby the Necessity of Preaching the Gospel, and the Value we ought to have for the Word of God, and the holy Ministry. V. And Lastly, we see, that the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Unbelief of

of the *Jews*, was formally foretold. What is to be consider'd thereupon is, on one Hand, that God had foreseen and foretold long before what was to happen, as well to the *Jews*, as to the *Gentiles*; this proves, after an invincible manner, that there is a Providence which governs all Things, and that the Christian Religion is of Divine Original; and on the other Hand, it is a Warning to us, not to imitate the Rebellion of the unbelieving *Jews*, lest God should say of us likewise: *All the Day long have I stretched out my Hands towards this Rebellious and Gainsaying People*; and lest, that having render'd our selves unworthy of his Favour, we should be entirely deprived thereof.

C H A P. XI.

ST. *Paul*, after having spoken of the Rejection of the *Jews*, asks whether God had wholly cast off this People whom he had chosen; to which he himself answers two Things. I. The one is, that all the *Jews* were not rejected, since there were several of them who had believed in *Jesus Christ*; just as in the Time of *Elijah*, there were several Worshipers of the true God; but that the rest of that Nation continued in Unbelief, according to the Oracles of the Prophets. II. The other thing that St. *Paul* answers is, that the *Jews* were not cast off for ever, but only for a Time, and that their Fall had given occasion for the Calling of the *Gentiles*, but that they would one Day be readmitted into the Covenant of God. III. After this, the Apostle exhorts the *Gentiles* to lay hold of the Goodness of God towards them, and of the Example of his Severity towards the *Jews*, lest if they should be puffed up with Pride, and fall into Un-

Unbelief, like the *Jews*, they were not also cut off. IV. And *Lastly*, he plainly foretels the Conversion of the *Jews*, proving it from the Prophets, and concludes this Subject in Adoring the Wisdom and Mercy of God, which appear in his Conduct towards both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and in what is to befall both of them in the latter Times.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E general Reflexion we are to make upon this Chapter is, that God had not entirely cast off the *Jews*, since divers of them did believe the Gospel, and since that Nation will be all of them converted one Day; that proves the Truth of God's Promises, and is a very strong Confirmation of the Veracity of the Christian Religion, and of the Divinity of the Holy Scripture. To this general Consideration, we may add the four following particular Reflexions. I. That as in the Time of the Apostles, as well as in the Days of *Elijah*, there were Believers among the *Jews* and the *Israelites*, God has likewise always some Elect in the midst of the greatest Depravity. II. *St. Paul* shews us the Use we should make of the Doctrine he has taught in this Epistle, concerning the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*; namely, that it ought to excite a Terror in us, and inspire us with Sentiments of Humility and Gratitude, us, I say, who are the Posterity of the *Heathens*, and induce us to embrace the Goodness of God, and to persevere in Faith, lest we likewise should be cut off. III. We have here a most remarkable Prediction, from whence we learn, that the whole *Jewish* People shall one Day be converted, and that then the Fulness of the Nations shall come into the

the Church. We ought to expect with Faith and Joy, the Accomplishment of this Prediction, to Pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and for the Conversion of the *Jews*, and in the mean Time to entertain a tender Compassion, and true Charity for them. IV. And, *Lastly*, when we consider this Procedure of God, as well towards the *Gentiles* as the *Jews*, and how he purposes to unite them one Day in his Church, it should stir us up to adore the Ways of the Lord, to celebrate his Mercy and Wisdom, and to say with *St. Paul*: *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! — For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: To whom be Glory for ever. Amen.*

C H A P. XII.

AFTER *St. Paul* had shewn that the *Gentiles* were called to Salvation by the great Mercy of God, he exhorts the *Romans*, in the remaining Part of this Epistle, to the Duties of a Christian Life, and particularly, to Peace and Charity. In this Chapter he does three Things: I. He exhorts Believers to devote themselves to the Service of God, and to renounce the World. II. He recommends to Christians, and especially to such as had any Calling whatsoever in the Church, or Gifts, by which they were distinguished from others, to exercise those Callings, and to employ those Gifts for publick Edification. III. He exhorts them above all to Charity, he shews the principal Duties of that Virtue, as well with respect to the Behaviour which Christians ought to observe among themselves, as in relation to the manner

manner in which they should behave towards those that Hate and Persecute them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn in general, from this and the following Chapters, that St. Paul, after having treated concerning Justification, Rejection of the Jews, and Calling of the Gentiles, speaks of the Duties of Christian Morality; that the Design of the Gospel is the Practice of Holiness, and of good Works; and that it is particularly the Effect which the Doctrine of our Redemption ought to produce, as well as the Consideration of the great Mercy that God has manifested to us in his Son. This Chapter does moreover furnish us with three particular Lessons. I. That the true Piety and the true Service which God requires of us, do consist in devoting ourselves entirely to him, in renouncing the World, in not imitating Worldly Men in their manner of Living, and in renewing our Spirit by an entire Submission and Conformity to the Will of God. II. That being all Members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, every one of us ought to apply the Gifts he has received to the Advantage of his Brethren; as they ought to do, more especially, who are called to any Office in the Church, by discharging the same with Zeal and Integrity. III. That Charity is our chief Duty, and that it includes all the rest, and that the principal Marks of Charity are the following: To love one another sincerely; to render mutually all kinds of good Offices; to interest our selves in the Good or Evil that befalls our Brethren; to Comfort and Assist those that are in Affliction, and to live together in a Spirit of Peace, Union, and Humility. Charity does yet farther oblige Christians

ans to love and bless those who hate them; to endeavour to have Peace with all Men, to abstain from Revenge, and to render Good for Evil. These are the most essential Duties of the Religion we profess, let us therefore exhort one another to the Practice thereof.

C H A P. XIII.

ST. *Paul* speaks in this Chapter, I. Of our Duty to the higher Powers. II. Of Love to our Neighbour, which is the Sum of the Law of God. III. He shews that Christians ought to live in great Holiness, and particularly, in Sobriety and Chastity, since God has delivered them from the Darknes of Ignorance, and enlightened them with the Light of the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E three Parts of this Chapter afford us these three Instructions; I. That Kings, Princes, and Magistrates, are appointed by God; that it is from him they receive the Authority of Governing the People, and of Punishing those who trouble the Peace of the Society; and that therefore, every one is bound in Conscience to submit himself to the higher Powers, to be faithful to them, and to render all that is due to them. II. That the Love of our Neighbour is as it were the Abridgment of the whole Law, which teaches us, that the true Way of fulfilling what the Law Commands, is to study chiefly the Duty of Charity, that is to say, to love our Neighbour sincerely. III. St. *Paul* teaches us here, that since the Darknes of that Ignorance, in which Men formerly lived, is driven away by the Light of the Gospel, and since we aspire to Salvation, we ought to avoid Sensuality, Dissoluteness,

luteness, Impurity, and all the desires of the Flesh, and to live in the Practice of great Chastity and Temperance. Let us observe these holy Maxims, and for our Encouragement, let us consider the happy State in which God has placed us; let us always represent to our selves, that the time of our Salvation draws near, and that our chief Study should be, to endeavour to partake thereof, through the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

C H A P. XIV.

TO understand this Chapter, we must know, that there were, in the time of *St. Paul*, certain Christians, who having been *Jews*, and not being sufficiently Instructed, scrupled the eating of certain Meats, and observed the Distinction of certain Days, after the *Jewish* manner. Wherefore *St. Paul* shews, I. How those weak Persons were to be treated. He says that they are to be born with, and that all Disputes with them ought to be avoided, since they who had different sentiments did follow each of 'em the dictates of their own Conscience. II. He represents next, that Christians only live unto the Lord, who alone has an entire Authority over them, no Body has a right to condemn others, every one being to give an Account of himself to God. He shews, III. That those who were enlightened and instructed in the Christian Liberty, ought not to abuse that Liberty, nor offend weak People, who made a Scruple of eating certain Meats. IV. And *Lastly*, he says, that the Spirit of Christianity is a Spirit of Peace and Forbearance, that it was a great Sin to give Offence to any one, but however, that every one ought to abstain from what

he thought forbidden, since all that we do against our Consciences is sinful.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Doctrine St. *Paul* teaches here amounts to this: That Christians are bound to bear with each other; that those who are most enlightened ought to have the greatest Consideration for such as are weak, and less knowing than themselves; that they ought not to despise them, nor do any thing that may grieve or offend them; that we ought to abstain from indifferent and allowed things when we foresee that they may be an occasion of Scandal to others. These are Maxims of Charity and Forbearance, from which we ought never to depart. We may conclude yet farther from hence, that Disputes and Quarrels are extreamly prejudicial to the Edification of the Church, and therefore we ought to avoid 'em as much as possible. Lastly, we should take a particular Notice of what St. *Paul* lays down at the end of this Chapter, viz. That every one should have a great Regard to his Conscience, and that *whatever is not of Faith is Sin*. This teaches us, that those who act against their own Conscience, or even those that do a Thing without being assured in their Conscience that it is Lawful, are very guilty before God; and that in order to please the Lord, and enjoy Peace of Conscience, we ought first to endeavour to satisfy it thoroughly, and to be well instructed in our Duty, and next to act conformably to what our Consciences prescribe to us.

C H A P. XV.

I. THE Apostle continues to exhort the Romans to Charity and Forbearance towards

wards such as are weak in Faith, proposing to them, for that purpose, the Example of *Jesus Christ*, and he beseeches God to inspire them with these Sentiments of Peace and Charity. II. In this View he represents to them, that Christ was sent to unite the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in his Church, as it had been foretold by the Prophets; by which he would convince them, that there ought to be no Division among them. III. He speaks next of his Ministry, and of the plentiful Fruits of his Preaching among the *Gentiles*, and in several Parts of the World; and he tells the *Romans*, that he intended to visit them after he had made a Journey to *Jerusalem*, on account of a Collection which was made for the Christians in that City. IV. And Lastly, he recommends himself to the Prayers of the *Romans*, praying likewise for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from this Chapter, I. That those who are advanced in Knowledge and Piety, ought to behave with great Condescension and Charity to those who are not come up to them, and thereby to imitate the Meekness and Goodness of our Lord. II. *St. Paul* shews the Design of this Epistle to the *Romans*, and the End of his Doctrine, by saying, that Christ came to save, not only the *Jews*, but the *Gentiles*, and to accomplish by this means the Promises which God had made to their Forefathers by the Prophets. This is a Truth upon which we should meditate, for the Strengthening our Faith, and for exciting us to gratitude towards God. III. We ought carefully to consider what *St. Paul* says in this Chapter of his Travels and Labours; of the wonderful Success of his Ministry, and of so many Churches which he had

founded in several Parts of the World, as well as of the Design he had to go to *Spain, Rome*, and other Places. All this ought to make us acknowledge the great Zeal of this Apostle, his perfect Charity, and above all, the Power of God, and the Divine Efficacy of the Gospel. This is likewise an Example which the Ministers of Christ ought to imitate as far as they are able, by labouring incessantly for the Establishment of the Kingdom of God. IV. And *Lastly*, the Zeal wherewith St. *Paul* recommends himself to the Prayers of the Christians at *Rome* shews, that the Ministers of Christ do greatly stand in need of being assisted by the Prayers of the Church, and that one of the chief Duties of Christians is, to pray for their spiritual Guides; as it is likewise the Duty of Pastors to send up continual Prayers for their Flocks.

C H A P. XVI.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Salutations St. *Paul* sends to several Christians of *Rome*. II. Exhortations to beware of those who occasion Troubles in the Church, teaching false Doctrine therein. III. The Wishes and Prayers which the Apostle makes in Favour of the *Romans*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E R E are two Things to be observed upon the Salutations contained in this Chapter: The *first* is, that the Gospel had already made a considerable Progress at *Rome*, and that there were in that City a large Number of People, who made Profession of the Christian Religion. The *second* relates to St. *Paul's* Charity

rity and Love which he shewed to the Church of *Rome*, and particularly to the Faithful, who are here named. 'Tis thus that Christians ought tenderly to love one another, to be strictly united, and to pray for each other, tho' they be never so far distant ; but those Persons are to be particularly cherished, who distinguish themselves by their Zeal and Piety. II. We learn next, that we ought to be upon our Guard against those that teach Errors, and form Sects and Parties in the Church, and always to adhere to the pure Doctrine of the Gospel, and to the Pastors who preach it. III. And *Lastly*, we ought to join our Thanksgivings to those which the Apostle returns to God at the end of this Epistle, and to bless Him, *that is of Power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the Preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the Revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the World began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith ;) To that God only Wise, be Glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*



I. *Corinthians.*



C H A P. I.



HIS Epistle was writ about the Year *Fifty one* of Christ. St. Paul gives several Instructions in it, as well concerning the Defects and Disorders that were found in the Church of *Corinth*, as upon several important Articles of Religion. I. The Apostle begins the first Chapter by Salutations, by Thanksgiving, and Prayers. II. He reproves the *Corinthians* for the Divisions that reigned among them, on account of the Ministers who had preached the Gospel to them. III. Speaking of himself, he says, that his Preaching was not attended with worldly Wisdom and Eloquence; but that he preached after a very plain manner, and suitable to the Nature of the Gospel, which is the Doctrine of the Cross; God having thought fit, of his infinite Wisdom, to save Mankind by a Means which appear'd Folly to worldly Persons and Unbelievers, viz.
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by Christ crucified, and to call to Salvation, such as were the least considerable among Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E may learn from what *St. Paul* says, at the beginning of this Epistle, and the Wishes he makes for the *Corinthians*, that the Perfection of Christians consists in being enriched with all sort of spiritual Gifts, so as to be found unblameable at the Coming of Christ. This is what we ought all to endeavour at, and what we ought to desire for each other. II. The Reproofs which *St. Paul* addresses to the *Corinthians*, concerning the Parties that reigned among them, teach us, that there is nothing more hurtful than Schisms and Divisions, especially those that are built upon Matters of Religion; that Christians ought never to call themselves the Disciples and Followers of any Minister or Teacher, whoever he be, but that they ought to adhere to *Jesus Christ* only, and that the Ministers of the Gospel, far from giving occasion to such Divisions, or of keeping them up, ought, after the Example of *St. Paul*, to hinder them with all their Might. III. It appears from this Chapter, that Ministers ought to preach the Gospel in great Simplicity, without aiming at the Wisdom and Eloquence of the Age, which is nothing but Foolishness before God; the End of their Ministry being to preach Christ crucified. IV. And Lastly, what *St. Paul* says here shews, that Christians ought not to value Riches, Nobility, Power, and other Temporal Advantages; that the Doctrine of the Gospel, and particularly the Cross of Christ, is the Means that God has chosen, by an effect of his Wisdom and Goodness, to save Men;

Men ; wherefore we ought to cleave to *Jesus Christ, who is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*

CHAP. II.

THIS Chapter consists of three Parts. St. Paul says, I. That he had preached the Gospel with great Simplicity. II. That tho' his Doctrine was simple, yet it was very sublime, and of a heavenly and divine Original. III. He concludes from thence, that this Doctrine being spiritual and heavenly, ought to be preach'd after the plainest Manner ; and that if it were rejected by any upon that Account, it was because such Men were carnal, and adhered to earthly Things.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Ministers of Christ, and all Christians, should learn from this Chapter, I. That the vain Eloquence, and the false Wisdom of the World, ought not to be mingled with the preaching of the Gospel. II. That the Doctrine of the Gospel, tho' very simple, is the most sublime, and the most perfect that ever was preached ; that it infinitely surpasses all that the most learned Men could ever discover, since it teaches Things which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.* It follows from thence, that a divine Revelation was absolutely necessary to our Salvation, to which we can attain by no other Way ; that we ought to esteem the Doctrine of the Gospel beyond all Things, without ever departing from the Christian Simplicity ; and that this Doctrine does not want
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to be supported by worldly Eloquence. III. We ought likewise to observe what *St. Paul* says farther, that *the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness unto him.* This teaches us, that carnal and earthly Men do not understand nor relish the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*; that that Doctrine being altogether Spiritual, cannot be received but by spiritual Men, and such as are disintangled from the Love of the World, and that suffer themselves to be guided by the Spirit of God.

C H A P. III.

ST. *Paul* does four Things in this Chapter. I. He says, that he had taught the *Corinthians* nothing but the first Foundation of Christianity, because of their weak Condition, and he reproves them for continuing still in the same, as appears from the Divisions that reign among them on account of the Ministers that preached the Gospel to them. II. To put a stop to these Divisions, he says, Ministers are only Instruments in the Hand of God for the Salvation of Men, and that the whole Fruit of their Ministry proceeds from God alone. III. He adds in the same View, that he was the first who preached the Gospel to the *Corinthians*, and that those who came after him, ought to take care to preach none but true and useful Doctrines, which he calls by the Name of Gold, Silver, and precious Stones; but not vain and doubtful Doctrines, which he compares to Hay or Stubble, and says, that those who preach such kind of Doctrines would lose the Fruits of their Labour, but that nevertheless, if they had preserved the Fundamentals of Christianity, they would be saved, as passing thro'

thro' the Fire, and by a particular Favour. IV. And Lastly, *St. Paul* declares, that the Church being the Temple and House of God, He will destroy those that hinder its Edification, by teaching dangerous Doctrines, and by stirring up Divisions, or in any other manner; and that the *Corinthians* should not boast but in God alone, and not in those who preached the Gospel, since that the Apostles and other Ministers were not appointed for their own Advantage, but for the Glory of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE four Parts of this Chapter furnish us with four Instructions. I. That the Ministers of *Jesus Christ* ought to propose his Doctrine with Prudence, and accommodate their Discourses to the Capacity of those whom they teach. II. What *St. Paul* says, that he planted, that *Apollos* watered, but that God gave the Increase, shews, on the one Hand, that the Ministry of Pastors and Teachers is very necessary, but that, on the other hand, the Efficacy of their Preaching must be ascribed to God alone. III. The third Instruction is, That it is of great Importance that none but profitable and edifying Doctrines should be taught in the Church; and that Ministers should be careful never to mingle with the essential Doctrines of Religion such as be vain, uncertain, and useless, for fear of losing thereby the Fruit of their Labour, and of hindering Edification. IV. *St. Paul* teaches us, that the Church being the Temple of God, every one ought to avoid with great Care all that may give Offence, and excite Troubles therein; that Ministers are not appointed but only for the Health of Believers;

ers ; and that both Ministers and the rest of the Christians ought to refer the Ministry and all other things to this end, and to the Glory of God.

C H A P. IV.

ST. Paul's Design here, is to remedy the Divisions that prevailed in the Church of *Corinth*, on Account of the Ministers who had Preached the Gospel there. In which View he does three things. I. He says that the *Corinthians* ought to respect the Ministers of the Lord ; but that it was not for them to prefer some Ministers to others ; that although he discharges his Office with a good Conscience, he did not think himself better than his Colleagues ; that all those Gifts which Ministers are endowed do proceed from God, and that it is God alone, and not Men, who is to judge of their Faithfulness. II. He speaks of the Persecutions, and other injurious Treatments to which he had been exposed. III. He acquaints the *Corinthians* that he should shortly visit them, threatening to make use of that Power which God had given him, to put a Stop to the Disorders in their Church, and to punish those who are the Authors thereof.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE see here ; I. What sentiments Christians ought to entertain of the true Ministers of Christ ; namely, to esteem and reverence them, but yet without attributing to them, what belongs only to God, and without adhering to some, and despising others. II. St. Paul teaches us, that we ought not to value too highly the Opinion of Men, that it is God only who can judge of our Faithfulness, and that
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it is he who will make manifest hidden Things, and the thoughts of Mens Hearts, and who will render to every one his due Praises. III. That all the Gifts and Advantages we enjoy, proceed from God, that we have nothing but what we have received from Him, and that therefore, instead of valuing our selves upon them, the Glory thereof belongs to Him alone. IV. We see in the Description which *St. Paul* gives of his Sufferings, that the faithful Servants of God, and even all true Christians, may be exposed to all kinds of Miseries and Disgraces; but the Example of this Apostle likewise shews, that such as are thus Afflicted, far from thinking themselves unhappy in this Condition, and from becoming uneasie under it, or desirous to revenge themselves upon those who are the Cause thereof, ought to bear all these Evils with Patience, and even with Joy, for the Edification of the Church, and to pray for those who harm them, and after that, to be little concerned at the Hatred and Contempt of the World, provided they have the Approbation of God and their own Conscience. The last Verses of this Chapter shew, that *St. Paul* tenderly loved the *Corinthians*, that it was against his Will that he threatened them with Chastisement, and that he had nothing else in View but their Edification. 'Tis likewise with such a Spirit, that all the true Ministers of the Lord are animated.

CHAP. V.

I. *ST. Paul* reproves the *Corinthians*, for suffering among them an incestuous Person, and he delivers him to Satan, that is to say, to be afflicted in his Body by Satan; which was a Punishment that the Apostles had the Power of Inflicting. II. He represents to them by the Parable

table of Leaven, that it is very dangerous to suffer notorious Sinners in the Church, since they infect and corrupt others. III. and *Lastly*, he orders the *Corinthians* to cut off from among them by Excommunication, those that are Impure, and all such as live in a scandalous Manner, and not to consider them as Brethren, or Members of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains a very important Doctrine. We see thereby the necessity of Discipline in the Church, and especially of that Part of Discipline, which consists in Excommunication. St. *Paul* teaches us, that when Persons, who style themselves Christians, fall into Sins, which dishonour the Religion of Jesus Christ, the whole Church ought to mourn for it, and should not suffer those Persons to remain in her Communion; but that they ought to be cut off by Excommunication, and that, for the Health of Sinners themselves, for the Honour of the Christian Religion, and for fear that their evil Example might corrupt the rest of the Members of the Church. St. *Paul* declares after the most positive manner, that we ought not to acknowledge for Brethren, nor even for Christians, unclean Persons, Unjust, Slanderers, Drunkards, or other scandalous Sinners, nor have any familiar Dealings with them. This is the Law of Jesus Christ: This is what the Holy Apostles have commanded in his Name, and what the first Christians practised; on which Account, we are forced to own, that the Church is not now Governed as it ought to be, since this kind of Excommunication is hardly exercised any where; nevertheless, the Duty of all true Christians is, to avoid as far as possible,
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all Correspondence with wicked Men, and to distinguish themselves from them, by a Holy and Exemplary Life.

C H A P. VI.

- I. **T**H E Apostle reproves the *Corinthians* for having recourse to heathen Judges and Magistrates, to determine their Law-Suits. II. He adds upon this Occasion, that those who wrong their Neighbour, shall not enter into Heaven, any more than those who were guilty of Impurity, and other Crimes which he here mentions. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* with great Force, and by several reasons, to avoid Impurity, as a Vice that was infamous, and altogether unworthy of Christians.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Reflexions we may make upon this Chapter are the three following: I. That Christians being Brethren, ought to avoid Law-Suits as much as possible; that they should endeavour to make an end of their differences amicably; and that if they be forced to have recourse to Judges, they should do it in a Spirit of Justice and Equity, of Meekness and Moderation, and without giving any Scandal. II. That those who wrong others, whether by unjust Law-Suits, or in any other manner, shall no more partake of the Kingdom of God, than the Impure and other scandalous Sinners; that Men lived in those Crimes while they were Heathens, but that God engaged them to renounce the same, by calling them to the Christian Religion, and by cleansing them from their Sins, by the Blood of Jesus Christ, and by the Grace of the Holy Ghost. III. The *Third* Instruction relates to Impu-

Impurity. *St. Paul* shews in this Chapter, that this Sin separates those who commit it from the Communion of Christ, and causes that they be no longer his Members; that unclean Persons dishonour their own Body, which ought to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and thereby deprive themselves of that holy Spirit. *Lastly*, he declares, that since we are redeemed by the precious Blood of *Jesus Christ*, our Bodies belong to God as well as our Souls; that therefore we are no longer our own, but are bound to glorify God both with our Body and Soul. All these Considerations are extreamly pressing; and since *St. Paul* alledges so many Reasons to dissuade Christians from Impurity, we ought to acknowledge that this Sin is very great, to have it in Abhorrence, and to endeavour to preserve great Purity both of Body and Soul, if we desire that God should own us for the Disciples and redeemed of his Son.

C H A P. VII. 1,—24.

ST. Paul answers in this Chapter to several Questions which the *Corinthians* had proposed about Marriage. He gives an account, I. Of the Institution and Duties thereof. II. He says it is not good to Marry; but that however Christians are at liberty to do it. III. He exhorts married Persons not to separate, and shews what was the Duty in this respect of such Men and Women as were married to *Heathens*. IV. And *Lastly*, he orders all Christians to continue in the several Callings and Conditions in which Providence had placed them, and to live according to the Will of God.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

FR O M what has been read, we may learn,
 I. That Marriage is a holy and honourable State, but that the Duty of Christians is, to lead that Life in Union and Concord, in Purity and Chastity, as also in Piety, by setting apart Seasons for Fasting and Prayer. II. That altho' the Conditions of those who do not marry be the more happy, yet every Man is left to his liberty; that each one ought therefore to regulate his Conduct in that Matter, according as he finds himself called to live in a married or single State. But that those who are not married, are bound to live in great Purity and Continency. III. That Husbands and Wives ought not to separate from each other; but, on the contrary, to live together, and to edifie themselves mutually, by living in Peace, Godliness, and Purity. IV. That God having thought fit that there should be different States and Conditions in the World, each one ought to continue in the Calling in which he finds himself, provided it be a lawful one, and faithfully discharge all the Duties in which such Calling engages him, without endeavouring to leave it by sinful Methods.

C H A P. VII. 25,—40.

TH E Apostle, after having discoursed concerning married Persons, speaks of those that are single, and of Virgins, and what he says of them amounts to this: That the Condition of these Persons was the Happiest, especially at that Juncture; which was in Times of Persecution; but that however they may marry if they will. He pronounces the same of Widows.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Doctrine of St. *Paul* in this Chapter, is in general; that Persons who don't Marry have several Advantages over others, provided they live in Chastity, since they may serve God with less Distraction in such a State, and that in the Times of Persecution they are more free, and better able to undergo it; but that whether People Marry, or whether they live in Celibacy, they ought to be Pure and Chast both in Body and Mind. Another and most wholesome Instruction which St. *Paul* here gives us, and which is adapted to all Seasons and all kinds of Persons is, that our Lives are short, that our Condition in this World is very uncertain, and all Things here below are fleeting; for which reason we ought not to set our Heart upon them: but that *it remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: for the Fashion of this World passeth away.*

C H A P. VIII.

ST. *Paul* examines the Question proposed to him by the *Corinthians*, whether it was lawful for Christians to eat of Things that had been offer'd to Idols. Whereupon he answers, I. That Christians who had been rightly Instructed, knew well enough that it was allowable to eat of all kind of Food, and that Idols were Vanity and Nothing, since there was but one God only. Nevertheless he adds, II. That that Liberty ought not to be abused, for fear of

giving Offence to weak Persons, and such as were not sufficiently Instructed nor confirmed in the Religion of Jesus Christ.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THOUGH we have no need to be informed at this Time concerning the Use of Things sacrificed to Idols, since the Idolatry of the Heathens is abolished from amongst us, and since we all know that there is but one God only, and that Idols are nothing; yet that does not hinder, but that the Doctrine which *St. Paul* lays down in this Chapter, may be of general Use. He teaches us here, that all Christians, and especially those among 'em who are best Instructed, should carefully avoid giving scandal to their Neighbour; and that we may offend our Neighbour, not only by doing Criminal things, but likewise such as are Lawful, for which Reason we ought to behave with great Circuspection and Prudence in the Use of those things. He shews us likewise, that it is a great Sin to give scandal to any one, since that thereby we may be the Occasion of our Neighbour's Destruction, and may be extreamly guilty even against Christ Himself. These are very weighty Considerations, and ought to be continually remembered in the whole Course of our Lives.

C H A P. IX.

ST. *Paul's* Design in this Chapter is to confirm, by his Example, what he had taught in the foregoing; namely, that when the Edification of our Neighbour is concerned, we ought to abstain from things that are permitted. In this View he does three Things. I. He says that he

he had a right, as an Apostle, to expect a Stipend for his Support, and to lead about with him a Wife, that should likewise be assisted at the expence of the Church. II. He adds, that he had not made Use of this Right, but shewn great Condescension towards all sorts of People, accommodating himself to the Scruples of the Weak, for fear of creating in them an Aversion to the Gospel. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* to imitate him therein, and to renounce the Use of Lawful things, when the Edification of their Neighbour and the Salvation of their own Souls required it. And he proposes to them for that Purpose, the Example of those who combated formerly in the Publick or *Olympick* Games of *Greece*, and who upon that Account lived in great Abstemiousness.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general Design of this Chapter is to teach us, that we must not always do whatever is allowable, and what we may have a Right to do; but that we ought to abstain from such a Right when the Glory of God and the Salvation of our Neighbour require it; and that it is the Duty of Christians to accommodate themselves as much as possible to all sorts of Persons, and particularly, to keep great Measures with the Weak, in order to bring them to the Faith. Besides this general Doctrine, which is of singular Use, we have here some particular Instructions, the chief of which are the Three following: I. That Christians are obliged, by the divine Law, and by the Commands of Jesus Christ, to provide for the Maintenance and Support of Pastors and their Families. II. That Ministers, in imitation of *St. Paul*, ought to behave with much Prudence

and Charity, to adapt themselves to the weakness of Men, to have no Consideration for their own private Interest, and to endeavour by all Ways and Means to gain to Christ as many Souls as they can. III. That we cannot discharge these Duties of Christianity, unless we live in great Temperance ; that to that end we must mortifie our Bodies, reduce them to Subjection, Abstinence, and Labour ; avoid Idleness, Luxury, and every thing that indulges too much the Flesh, and pursue such a kind of Life as is conformable to the Precepts of the Gospel, and the Example of Christ and his Apostles ; to the end that by those Means we may obtain the glorious Reward which is reserved for all those that shall carefully discharge these Duties.

C H A P. X.

THE Apostle continuing the Matter he had treated of, in the two preceeding Chapters, touching the Use of Meats sacrificed to Idols, represents here to the *Corinthians*, I. That though the ancient *Israelites* were the People of God, and that they enjoyed the like Advantages which the Christians now do, yet they had been drawn away to Idolatry and Impurity, by assisting at the Feasts of Idolaters ; and that by their Sensuality and frequent Murmurings they had brought upon themselves the Judgments of God. He says that Christians ought to make a good Use of these Examples, and beware of falling into Idolatry. II. He adds, in the same View, that the Use of the Holy Supper, whereby Christians partake of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, did not allow them to assist at the Entertainments which the *Pagans* made in Honour of their Idols, nor to eat of the Meats that had been sacrificed to false Gods, since that would be

be partaking of Idolatry, and exposing themselves to divine Vengeance. III. He concludes that Christians might eat of all kind of Meats in private Houses, but if they were told that such Meats had been sacrificed to Idols, they ought to forbear, not because it was sinful to eat thereof, but to avoid giving Scandal; and he exhorts the *Corinthians* to regard in all Things the Glory of God, and the Edification of their Neighbours.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been said in this Chapter, obliges us to consider, I. That if the Ancient *Jews* were punished for having abused the Favours God had granted them, we shall be punished much more severely, if we abuse those that we have received, since they are far more excellent. II. The Example of the *Israelites*, who, by partaking of the Feasts of Idolaters, fell into Impurity and Idolatry, and the Vengeance that God took upon them for the same, is a warning to us, as St. *Paul* says, to avoid the Occasions of Sin, and particularly to put away from us all Sensuality and Uncleanneſs, least that if we suffer our selves to be carried away by them, we be exposed to the Judgments of God. III. We ought to consider, that if St. *Paul* asserts, that Christians might not partake of the Table of the Lord, and at the same Time eat of that which was sacrificed to Idols, the Participation of the Holy Supper is not less incompatible with a carnal and corrupt Life; and that the Publick and Solemn Commemoration which we make in this Sacrament of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, does indispensably oblige us to lead a pure and holy Life. IV. Let us carefully retain this general Doctrine, that in

all our Actions, even in those that are Indifferent and Lawful, we ought always to have in View, the Glory of God, and the Edification of our Neighbour, as St. *Paul* directs by the Rule which he gives us: *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.*

C H A P. XI.

THIS Chapter, in which St. *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for the Disorders they committed at their Religious Meetings, consists of two Parts. I. In the *First*, he prescribes the manner in which Women should behave in the Church; and what he says, is founded upon the Rules of Decency, which require that Women should not appear in Publick without being veiled, and their Head covered, which was likewise the Custom of the *Jews*, and other People in that Age. II. In the *Second* Part, he reproves the *Corinthians* for the Irreverence and Disorder in which they celebrated the Holy Supper, at the end of their Charity-Fests; and to induce them to correct those abuses, he relates the Institution of this Sacrament; he shews the Use that should be made of it, and tells the *Corinthians*, that it was for the Punishment of the Indevotion with which they partook of it, that several of 'em were afflicted with Sicknesses, and some even with Death it self.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Warnings St. *Paul* gave the *Corinthians* upon what passed in their Assemblies, instruct us in general, that Order, Gravity and Decency, ought to be observed in the Congregations of the Church, and particularly, that Women

men ought to appear there with respect, and after such a Manner as may denote the Submission, Humility, and Modesty, belonging to their Sex. In the next Place, we should make the most serious Reflexions upon what *St. Paul* says here, concerning the Holy Supper and its Use: It appears by this Chapter, I. That this Sacrament is a solemn Institution of our Blessed Redeemer, and that in the Time of *St. Paul*, it was celebrated in all the Christian Churches. II. That the end for which Christ appointed the Holy Supper, was to declare the Remembrance of his Death, until his coming again at the last Day. III. That we ought to celebrate this Sacrament with very great Reverence, that we should try our selves before we resort to it, that those who do not so, and who partake unworthily thereof, are guilty of a very criminal Contempt of Christ Himself, and eat and drink their own Condemnation. IV. And *Lastly*, it is to be observed, that God punished the Abuse of the Holy Supper, in the Time of the Apostle, by Sicknes and Death. From whence we may conclude, that this Sacrament is a very Holy Institution, and that those who profane it, either by Rashness or Hypocrisy, may expect a most severe Condemnation.

C H A P. XII.

THE Design of *St. Paul* in this Chapter, is to Instruct the *Corinthians* about the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the Use that is to be made thereof, and to prevent Divisions from arising in the Church upon that Occasion; for which Purpose he does two things. I. He says, that all those who had renounced Idolatry, and believed in Jesus Christ, were partakers of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. He observes, that

God granted to the Ministers of the Church, and even to several of the Believers of that time, divers extraordinary Gifts, such as that of speaking all kind of Languages, of healing the Sick, and the like; that all these Gifts proceeded from the same Author, but that they were different, and that all those who had received the Spirit of God, did not possess the same Gifts, nor the same Measure thereof. II. He shews that these Gifts. proceeding all from the same Spirit, and the Believers composing altogether but one only Body, they ought to be employed to the common Advantage and Edification of the Church; 'tis in this View that *St. Paul* instances in the Comparison of a Humane Body; and observes, that although all the Members have not the same Functions, nor the same Dignity, they are notwithstanding all necessary, and do all contribute to the good of the Body. By this *St. Paul* would convince the *Corinthians*, that instead of Quarrelling about the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, they ought to use them for the Edification of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT we may benefit by this Reading, it must be observed, I. That the miraculous Gifts which formerly obtained in the Church, were an undeniable Proof of the Divinity of the Christian Religion, and a very efficacious Means to confirm Christians in the Faith, and to bring into it both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. II. Though these extraordinary Gifts are not to be met with now, yet we should apply the Doctrine contained in this Chapter, to the ordinary Gifts of the Spirit of God, and learn thereby, that all spiritual Gifts and Graces proceed from the Holy Ghost. That God bestows them upon Men
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in different Degrees ; but as we do only compose one Body altogether, we ought to appropriate all the Gifts which we have received to one and the same End, which is, to the common Edification and Benefit of the Church, and to live in perfect Union, and Harmony among our selves, each of us being contented with that Measure of Grace, which God has been pleased to distribute to us, and possessing the same with Humility. *Lastly*, St. Paul shews, towards the End of this Chapter, that there are more excellent and more wholesome Gifts than the Miraculous ones beforementioned, namely, those of true Faith and Charity, of which he treats in the following Chapter ; these are therefore the Gifts which we ought chiefly to seek after.

C H A P. XIII.

I. **S**T. Paul, after having spoken of the miraculous and supernatural Gifts, teaches, that as great and excellent as they are, they are of no value without Charity. II. He afterwards describes the Nature and Characters of this Virtue, he proves that it banishes Divisions, Jealousies, and Pride ; and this he says, because those Vices reigned among the *Corinthians*. III. And *Lastly*, he shews that Charity is the chief of all Virtues, were it upon no other Consideration, than that other Virtues and miraculous Gifts will be abolished, whereas Charity will have no end.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which treats of Charity, ought to be continually meditated by all Christians ; St. Paul here shews the Nature and Excellency of this Virtue. He proves the Excellency

cellency of it on these two Accounts : I. That without Charity, that is to say, without a sincere Love for our Neighbour, all other Gifts are unprofitable, and we are nothing in the Sight of God. II. That this is a Virtue which will last for ever, and which will render us perfect in Heaven, as it does upon Earth. The Apostle instructs us next in the Nature of Charity. He says, that those Persons who are endowed with this Virtue, are neither envious nor suspicious, nor Self-interested, nor Peevish, nor Quarrelsome ; but that they are Patient, Meek, Peaceable ; that they judge charitably, that they do Good, that they bear all Things. Let us carefully attend to these Characters, and labour to gain them ; and since Charity is the great and principal Virtue of Christianity, and the Band of all other Virtues, let us chiefly apply ourselves to the Practice thereof.

C H A P. XIV.

I. **S**T. *Paul* continues to speak of miraculous Gifts, and particularly of the Gift of speaking divers Languages ; and he says, that although this be an excellent Gift, yet that of Prophecy, that is to say, the Gift of explaining Scripture, was much more beneficial for the Edification of the Church. Upon this occasion he shews why, and for what purpose, God granted in those Times the Gift of Languages to certain Persons. II. He orders next, that those who spoke those Languages, or who had any Revelation, should proceed in Order, and after one another, and that there should always be somebody to interpret what they said ; he directs farther, that Women should keep silence in the Church, and that all should be done with Decency and Order.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH O' the Gift of speaking divers Languages, has ceased in the Church, and though there be no Revelations at present, as there was in the Time of the Apostles, yet we may gather from this Chapter the following important Instructions. I. That these extraordinary Gifts were, as *St. Paul* says, a strong Proof of the Truth of the Gospel. II. That as excellent as such Gifts were, they were not advantageous or wholesome, unless applied to the Instruction and Edification of the whole Church, which ought always to be the great End of Religion. III. That it is of the utmost Moment to communicate to the People, a clear Knowledge of the Truths which God has revealed to us, and for that purpose, to explain the Scriptures familiarly and intelligibly; that accordingly, the Reading of the Bible, Exhortations, Prayers, Psalmody, Celebration of Divine Service, and in general, every thing that is done in the Church, ought to be performed in a Language which the common People understand, and in a plain and simple manner, and accommodated to the Capacity of every Body. IV. And *Lastly*, we ought carefully to attend to the Rule that *St. Paul* lays down throughout this whole Chapter, and particularly in the last Verse: God is not a God of Confusion, but a God of Order and Peace, and that all Things ought to be done in the Church with Decency, Order, and Gravity.

CHAP.

C H A P. XV. 1,—34.

ST. *Paul* proves in this Chapter the Resurrection of the Dead, against certain Persons who denied the same. For which purpose he lays down, I. That our Lord *Jesus Christ* is risen from the Dead, which he proves by the Testimony of the Apostles, and several other Persons. II. He infers from thence, that the Dead shall rise again, which he illustrates and confirms by several Arguments.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter is an excellent Discourse, in which the Doctrine of the Resurrection is fully explained. St. *Paul* teaches here, I. That the whole Christian Religion is founded upon the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, and that the said Resurrection is a certain and undoubted Fact, attested by the Apostles themselves, whose Evidence cannot be questioned. II. St. *Paul* shews, that the Dead will infallibly rise again, and the Proofs alledged by him are the following: That if the Dead were not raised, Christ would not have risen, and our Faith would have been vain; that the Faithful, who have died in the Lord, would have perished for ever; that Christians would have been the most Miserable of all Men; that the Evil which *Adam* has brought upon us, by subjecting us to Death, could not have been otherwise attoned for. III. He says farther, that Christ would not fully reign over all Things, if by raising us, He did not destroy Death, which is our last Enemy; and finally, that if there was no such Thing as the Resurrection, it would be a great Folly

Folly for Christians to expose themselves to all the Evils which they underwent. Let us deeply engrave in our Hearts, a Doctrine so comfortable as this is; and let us return Thanks to God for having establish'd the Hopes of our Resurrection upon such sure Foundations. Let us take heed that the Words and Examples of prophane Persons do not stagger our Faith, and endeavour to confirm our selves therein more and more; but let us likewise remember, that this Doctrine should provoke us to live in Piety, and that it is only by a holy Life that we can partake of the Resurrection of the Just.

C H A P. XV. 35,—58.

ST. Paul, after having proved the Resurrection of the Dead, shews, I. That although our Bodies are destroyed by Death, they will be restored to Life, and that then they shall be no longer corruptible, weak, and mortal, as they now are; which he explains by the Comparison of Grain that is sown, and by some other Types. II. He speaks next, of what will happen to those who shall be Living at the Time of the Resurrection, or last Day. And, III. concludes, by describing those Sentiments of Joy and Piety wherewith the Belief of the Resurrection ought to inspire all true Christians.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Design of what we have read is,
I. To teach us, that although Death destroys our Bodies, and reduces them to
Dust,

Dust, they will nevertheless be raised again by an effect of the Omnipotence of our Lord ; and that the Bodies thus raised, will be incorruptible and glorious, inasmuch, that we shall all be then like *Jesus Christ*.

II. Besides this, we see that those who shall live to the End of the World will be changed in an instant, and that accordingly all the Faithful will become immortal. III.

The Expectation of this great Glory, for which we are reserved, ought to fill us with Hope and Joy ; to dissipate entirely the Terrors of Death, and to make us say with *St. Paul* : *O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory ? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ*. But the Hope of this Resurrection of our Bodies, does likewise oblige us to preserve them in great Purity, and to practise continually all the Duties of Christianity ; 'tis what *St. Paul* exhorts us to by these Words, which shew the Use of this Doctrine : *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord ; forasmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord*.

C H A P. XVI.

I. **T**H E Apostle exhorts the *Corinthians* to contribute to a Collection that was made in Favour of the Churches of *Judea*.

II. He promises to see them in a little Time, recommending to them *Timothy*, and some other Persons. And, III. concludes by Salutations and Wishes, and by declaring, that those who did not love the Lord *Jesus Christ*

Christ sincerely, were under the Judgment of God, and ought not to be look'd upon as Brethren, or Members of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Exhortations which St. Paul makes the *Corinthians*, to engage them to assist the Churches of *Judea*, for which there was a Collection making, and to lay apart something on that Account every first Day of the Week, is a Lesson to us, that every one ought to exercise Charity according to his Ability, as often as there is a proper Occasion, and particularly on the Lord's Day. II. The Manner in which St. Paul recommends *Timothy*, and some other zealous and godly Persons, teaches us, that we ought to have great Consideration for the true Ministers of the Lord, and for all such as devote themselves to his Service. III. The Salutations we read at the End of this Epistle shew, that there ought to be a most strict Communion among the Churches, and Christians of all Parts; that all good Christians love one another affectionately, and especially, that the true Ministers of the Lord do pray without ceasing for all the Faithful, wishing them the Grace of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Finally, We ought to give a very particular Attention to the *Anathema* which St. Paul denounced against all those that do not love Christ sincerely, whereby he threatens them with the Curse of God, and requires all the Churches,

es, not to consider as Christians those who give publick Proofs that they are not so. This denotes plainly, that it is the Duty of the Church to Excommunicate scandalous and prophane Persons; and that all such as have not a true Love for our Saviour, and who do not keep his Commandments, do by no means belong to Him, but remain under the Curse of God.





II. *Corinthians.*



CHAP. I.



THE second Epistle of *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, was writ about the *Fifty second* Year of our Lord. The principal Design of the Apostle in this Epistle is, to defend his Ministry against those who disparag'd it among the *Corinthians*.

After the Salutation, *St. Paul* speaks in this Chapter, I. Of the great Afflictions he had undergone in *Asia*, and from which God had deliver'd him by a kind of Miracle. II. He tells the *Corinthians* in the next Place, that if he did not come and see them, as he had promised, it did not proceed from Levity nor Inconstancy, nor want of Kindness towards them; but that he had delayed his Voyage, that he might not be obliged to reprove and chastise them on account of the Disorders that prevailed in their Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT St. *Paul* says in the beginning of this Epistle, of his Sufferings, as well as of the Assistance and Comfort which God had sent him, teaches us, I. That the Faithful are sometimes exposed to great Dangers, and extream Afflictions, but that God supports and strengthens them in such a State, and at length graciously delivers them; that these Afflictions do thereby produce most wholesome effects, not only for the Joy of those who are Afflicted, but likewise for the Edification of their Brethren; since those who have thus suffered, are more proper to comfort and encourage others in any trouble whatsoever. St. *Paul* adds farther, upon this Occasion, that the mutual Prayers of the Faithful do greatly contribute to obtain from God these kinds of Deliverances. II. What St. *Paul* says of the sincerity in which he behaved through the whole course of his Ministry, and particularly towards the *Corinthians*, should be an Instruction and Example to all Christians, and chiefly to Christ's Ministers, and teach 'em, that as the Master whom they profess to serve is Truth it self, so they ought likewise to behave with Sincerity, to avoid every thing particularly that Borders upon Levity and Inconstancy, to speak and act always with a spirit of Candour, Zeal, Humility, and Charity, to the end that they may thereby approve themselves both to God and Man.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

I. **S**T. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, that it was to spare them, and that he might not have the Sorrow of reproving them for their irregularities, that he forbore going to *Corinth*; and he requires them to receive into the Peace of the Church, the incestuous Person that had been Excommunicated, and of whom he had made mention in the former Epistle, because he had repented. II. He acquaints them with some of his Travels, and upon that Occasion speaks of the Efficacy and Fruits of his Ministry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **S**T. Paul shews in this Chapter a great Tendernefs for the *Corinthians*, and particularly for that incestuous Person whom he had delivered to Satan, but who had afterwards repented. These Sentiments of St. Paul, may serve for a Rule to Pastors, and inspire them with a tender Love for their Flocks, and even for the greatest Sinners. We see here, that if the Church is obliged to cut off scandalous Sinners from her Communion, she ought not to do it, but only with a View to bring them to Repentance; and that when we discover in them sufficient tokens of Amendment, we ought to receive them with Joy and heartiness. II. The Thanksgivings which St. Paul renders to God, for the Glorious Success of his Ministry, are a Proof of his Humility as well as of his great Zeal. The true Ministers of Christ are never more glad, than when they can spread the Knowledge of God; but they always attribute to God alone, and to the Ef-

ficacy of his Grace, all the good Success they meet with. III. The last Verses of this Chapter teach us, that the Preaching of the Gospel does not always produce the same effects in all kinds of Persons; that it is to some a favour of Death, that is to say, an Occasion of Condemnation, since by rejecting this Gospel they become more Wicked, and aggravate their Punishment; but to others 'tis a favour of Life, that is to say, an efficacious Means to bring them to a spiritual Life, and to Salvation.

C H A P. III.

I. **S**T. Paul represents to the *Corinthians*, that their Conversion to the Christian Religion was a sufficient proof of his Calling, and that he stood in need of no other recommendation to them, than the Testimony of their Conscience; but he acknowledges at the same Time, that the Efficacy of his Ministry proceeded only from God. II. He shews in the next Place, that the Ministry of the Gospel is much more excellent than that of the Law, forasmuch as this last was imperfect, incapable of giving Life, and was not to continue always; from whence St. Paul concludes, that those who had adhered to the Law of *Moses*, remained in Ignorance, and that there be none but those who cleave to the Gospel, that are truly enlightened, and enjoy the Liberty and Glory of God. The Apostle says all this, to defend himself against certain Teachers that opposed him, and made a shew of a great Zeal for the Law of *Moses*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That that which makes the Glory of the Ministers of Jesus Christ, and which recommends them to God and Men, is the Fruits of their Preaching, and the Share they have in the Love and Affections of Christians. II. That they ought not to ascribe to themselves the Success of their Ministry; but that the Honour of it is due to God alone. III. That the Gospel is much more excellent than the Law, and the Ministry thereof infinitely more glorious than that of *Moses*, since the Christian Doctrine gives us a much more perfect Knowledge of the Will of God by Jesus Christ, causing us to partake of the true Liberty and Glory of the Lord Himself. From whence it follows, that if there be any who don't believe, it proceeds from their wilful Blindness. That we ought to value this Gospel beyond all things, and that as well those who Preach it, as those who make Profession of it, ought to do it openly, and without Shame, as *St. Paul* will shew us in the following Chapter.

C H A P. IV.

I. **T**HE Apostle continues to speak of the Courage and Sincerity, with which he had exercised his Ministry; but he shews that there were incredulous Persons, who did not believe in the Gospel, whilst, on the contrary, there were others, whose Eyes were open to this heavenly Light. II. He says farther, that he himself and other Ministers being weak Men, the Efficacy of their Preaching did not proceed from themselves, but came from God

alone. He discourses likewise of the Persecutions and Sufferings to which he was exposed, and says, that Faith in Christ, and the Hopes of eternal Glory, were the Cause that he did not lose Courage, but that he underwent all these Evils with Perseverance, and even with Joy.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Considerations which occur to us here, are the following: I. That the Ministers of Jesus Christ ought to put away all Artifice and Dissimulation, and to speak always freely and sincerely, as in the Presence of God, seeking only to manifest the Truth in the Conscience of all Men. II. That if there are any such People as will not acknowledge the Truth of the Gospel, it is wholly their own Fault, and they perish justly in their Unbelief. III. That the Servants of God and all Christians ought to bear with Courage the heaviest Afflictions, since they tend to the Edification of the Church, and since we know that those who partake of the Sufferings of Jesus Christ shall likewise partake of his Resurrection, Life, and Glory. IV. That Afflictions are light, and of short duration, and produce in us an infinitely excelling Glory; but that the means of enduring 'em with Patience, of never losing Courage, and of always persevering in Faith, is, not to look at things visible, which are only for a Time; but at the invisible, which are Eternal.

C H A P. V.

I T H E Apostle continues the Discourse he had begun concerning the Afflictions he underwent, and the Comfort he received from the Hope of a better Life; he speaks of
the

the Happiness which the Faithful shall enjoy after their Death ; and he says, that the Consideration of that Happiness, and of the Judgment at which we must all appear, were the Cause that he earnestly desired to leave this World, to be with the Lord ; and that in this Expectation, he suffer'd Afflictions with Courage, and labour'd to render himself acceptable to God, by faithfully discharging his Duty.

II. He returns next to the Discourse about his Ministry, and says, that the Love of *Jesus Christ*, who died for all Men, was a strong Motive to Him, to live only for the Edification of the Believers. He declares, he did no longer adhere to external Things, such as the Ceremonies of the Law, and the Advantages of which the *Jews* boasted ; and that he had no other Design, but to make Men become new Creatures, and to reconcile them with God by *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains very comfortable and wholesome Doctrines. We see here, I. The sweet and glorious Hope which Believers have, that tho' their Body be destroyed by Death, yet there is another more happy State, and never-fading Glory, which waits for them ; and that when they leave this Body, they will be with the Lord. II. *St. Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, that *We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* III. He shews the Use to be made of this Doctrine is, continually to sigh after, and to long for this happy State, which is reserved for the Children of God, and in the mean time to live in the Fear of the Lord, and in Faith, studying to render our selves acceptable

ptable to Him in all Times, and in all Places. IV. *St. Paul* adds, that the great Love which Christ has shewn us, in dying for our Salvation, is a most pressing Argument, if we understand it rightly, to live no longer to our selves, but to employ our whole Life for the Edification of our Brethren, and to the Glory of Him who died and rose again for us. *Lastly*, Since the Design of the Ministry of the Gospel is, as we have heard, to make Men become new Creatures, and to reconcile them to God by *Jesus Christ*, we ought to wean our Hearts more and more from the World, to become new Men, to set a high Value upon this Gospel, and zealously to improve the Means which God offers us, to be reconciled with Him, and to obtain from his Mercy, the pardon of our Sins, through the Merit of *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

C H A P. VI.

Add to it the first Verse of Chap. VII.

THIS Chapter consists of two Parts. I. The Apostle says, that he had set himself to discharge his Ministry with Integrity, Zeal, Charity, and Patience, in the midst of the Afflictions and Disgraces to which he had been exposed; and he conjures the *Corinthians* to make suitable Returns to this great Zeal and fervent Love with which he was animated for their sake. II. He exhorts them to imitate his Zeal and Sincerity, by making a pure Profession of Christianity, and for that Reason, avoiding all Commerce with Idolaters, and by becoming pure both in Body and Soul.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Instruction we have here, relates to the Ministers of the Gospel. St. *Paul* teaches them by his own Example, to discharge their Office with fidelity, to behave in such a Manner, as to give no Offence, nor to dishonour their Ministry, but to render it commendable by the Purity of their Life, by a sincere and open Profession of their Virtue, by a perfect Charity, by Meekness, by Humility, and Patience in Affliction. II. We learn in the second Place, that as Pastors ought entirely to devote themselves to the Church, and be full of a tender Love for their Flocks, so the Flocks ought to make suitable Returns, and to esteem them no less tenderly in the Lord. We may observe, III. That as St. *Paul* forbids the *Corinthians* to have to do with Idolaters, so neither is it allowable for Christians to associate themselves with carnal Men, and to join a worldly Life to the Profession of the Gospel. Let us always remember for this purpose, that there is no Agreement between Righteousness and Iniquity, between Light and Darkness; that God having chosen us to be his Children, if we would have Him own us as such, we ought to avoid Correspondence with worldly Men, to depart from them, and to have no share in their Pollutions; and that the great and excellent Promises which He has made us, do indispensably oblige us to cleanse our selves from all Defilement of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. May He himself grant us this Grace!

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

I. **S**T. *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to entertain the same Affection for him as he had for them. II. He signifies next, the great Joy he had to learn by *Titus* what great Impression his Epistle had made upon them, and what they had done after receiving it, with respect to the incestuous Person in their Church; whereupon he takes occasion to speak of the Nature and Effects of true Repentance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE must make the following Considerations upon this Chapter. I. That there ought to be a great Love, and a mutual Tenderneſs, between Pastors and their Flocks, ſuch for inſtance as St. *Paul* had conceived for the *Corinthians*, and which he wiſhed they might have for him. II. The Manner in which the *Corinthians* received *Titus*, and the Effect which St. *Paul's* Reproofs produced upon them, teaches us, that Churches ought to receive with Love and Reliance, the faithful Miniſters of the Lord, and ſubmit to their Corrections and Remonſtrances. III. The great Joy with which St. *Paul* was filled, when *Titus* informed him of the happy State of the Church of *Corinth*, ſhews, that the ſweeteſt Pleaſure which Paſtors can taſt is, to ſee the Fruits of their Miniſtry. This Chapter inſtructs us, IV. upon the Nature of true Repentance. St. *Paul* ſays, there is a Sorrow according to the World, which is not attended with any whoſome Change, and which only produces Death; whereas godly Sorrow is followed by Peace, and very ſweet Comfort, and produces moſt
advan-

advantageous Effects ; since it fills those whom it affects with a lively Sorrow and just Indignation against themselves, inspiring them with Fear and Zeal, and provoking them to repair, by all possible Means, the Evil they have done.

C H A P. VIII.

I. **T**HE Apostle informs the *Corinthians*, of the Liberality which the Churches of *Macedonia* had shewn in a Collection made for that of *Jerusalem*. II. He exhorts them to imitate that Example, and finish that Collection which had been begun the foregoing Year, and tells them that he sent them for that purpose *Titus*, and another Person, which was probably *St. Luke*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Chapter, which furnishes us with divers Instructions about Alms. I. The first is, that Christians are obliged to exercise Charity as often as they meet with an Occasion, and are able to do it, especially when 'tis to assist their Brethren. *St. Paul* says upon this subject, that Persons who have devoted themselves to God, and are well instructed in the Grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, do always discharge this Duty with Pleasure. II. The Example of the Churches of *Macedonia*, which this Apostle proposes to the *Corinthians*, shews, that such as exercise Charity do a very good thing, since they do not only relieve the Necessitous, but likewise set a good Pattern to the whole Church, and stir up others to imitate the same. III. That in the Works of Charity, God regards chiefly the Readiness and good Will wherewith
it

it is performed. IV. That Charity ought to be done in a just Proportion, so as that every one may contribute according to his Power, and that some be not more burthen'd than others; and that 'tis but reasonable that those who have been relieved, should likewise assist others in their turn. V. And *Lastly*, The great Precautions that St. *Paul* uses in the Distribution of Collections, to the end that no Body might blame him, and the Care he takes to put them into the Hands of faithful and approved Persons, shews, that we ought to administer Charity with very great Integrity and Prudence; and that they who have the Care of Distributing the Alms of the Faithful, ought to do it in such a Manner, as to give no Handle for Reproach, nor even, if possible, for the least Suspicion.

CHAP. IX.

I. *ST. Paul* continues to exhort the *Corinthians* to assist the Churches of *Judea*, and to do it bountifully and freely. II. And that he may engage them to this Duty, he tells them of the Blessing that charitable Persons are to expect from God; and of the good Effects which the Exercise of Charity produces for the Glory of God, and the Edification of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter treats of Alms and Charity as well as the foregoing, and the Apostle proposes here three Things particularly, which we ought carefully to retain, *viz.* The Manner of doing our Charity; the Reward of charitable People; and the Effects that Charity

rity produces. I. As to the Manner, *St. Paul* says, that in order to please God, we must give as much as we are able, with chearfulness and liberality, because *God loves a chearful Giver*. II. The Promises he makes the *Corinthians*, do not allow us to doubt, whether God will reward benevolent and charitable Persons, even with temporal Blessings, by multiplying their Goods in such Manner, that they will always have not only what is necessary for themselves, but likewise sufficient to assist such as are in Want. III. We ought likewise seriously to consider the good Effects which Charity produces, since it rejoices the Saints, comforts the Afflicted, engaging them to praise God, edifies the Church, and is the Cause that many People seeing the Bountifulness of the Faithful, do glorifie the holy Name of God, do pray for charitable Persons, and are stirred up to imitate them; all which contributes greatly to promote the Gospel. These Considerations should provoke us to Charity, and 'tis particularly the Duty of those, to whom God has given the good Things of this Life, to improve what they have now heard.

C H A P. X.

THE Design of *St. Paul* in this Chapter and the following is, to defend himself against those who endeavour to lessen his Authority, and to render him contemptible to the *Corinthians*. 'Tis with this View he speaks, I. Of the spiritual Power God had given him, and the Use he made of it, for the Edification of the Church. II. He says next, that he was not full of Pride, like those who spoke Evil of him, albeit that he enjoyed some Advantages which they had not.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Care that St. *Paul* takes to justify and defend himself against such as blamed him, and what he says concerning his Authority, and the spiritual Power God had given him, shews, that it is lawful to maintain one's Innocence, provided it be done with Temper, and for a good End. It proves, particularly, that altho' the Servants of God ought to be entirely free from Pride, yet they are allowed, yea, they are even obliged to assert the Honour of their Ministry; to make Use of the Authority they have received from Christ, agreeable to his Intentions; to resist with steadiness all those who would obstruct the promoting the Kingdom of God, and the Edification of the Church: And that the end which they ought to propose to themselves, is to remove all obstructions to the Knowledge of God, and to draw the Minds of Men to the Obedience of Christ. We are even taught thereby, that Christians ought to have in reverence good and faithful Pastors, and to submit to their Authority, since they likewise have their Commission from Jesus Christ, though they be much inferior to the Apostles. *Lastly*, The manner in which St. *Paul* speaks of himself, and the remarks he makes upon the Pride of those Teachers who opposed him, should make us own, that Humility is the Character of a true Minister of Christ, and 'tis a great Misfortune to the Church, when the Ministers that are set over her are animated with a Spirit of Pride, Presumption, Envy, and Jealousie; and when they occasion Strife and Divisions.

C H A P. XI.

I. **S**T. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, that the great Love he had for them, and his fear least they should be seduced by those who endeavoured to vilifie him, compelled him to make mention, tho' against his Mind, of the Gifts and Graces wherewith God had enriched him, and of what he had done for them. II. He brings to their Remembrance, that he had declared the Gospel to them without receiving any thing from them, which was more than the false Apostles could say. III. And he shews Lastly, that he could boast of his being better than those false Apostles, as well by reason of his great Labours, as on Account of his Sufferings, of which he gives us here a very remarkable Catalogue.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which we may observe in general in this Chapter is, that St. Paul does here maintain the Honour of his Apostleship, but does it after a very humble Manner; and that though he speaks to his own Praise, yet the Qualifications and Excuses he alledges, do sufficiently shew that he was forced to do it. From hence we may conclude, I. That we ought always to speak of our selves with great Modesty; that Modesty and Humility ought particularly to be found in the Ministers of Jesus Christ; but that they may nevertheless assert their own Innocency, and the Honour of their Ministry, when 'tis necessary for publick Edification. II. The fear which St. Paul had, least the *Corinthians* should suffer themselves to be drawn aside from the Simplicity of the Gospel by false Teachers, and what he says,

says, that the Ministers of Satan transform themselves into Angels of Light, is a warning to Christians to be upon their Defence, and carefully to distinguish Doctrines, and the Propagators of them, and not suffer themselves to be surprized by the false Appearances of Piety and Zeal. III. We have seen that *St. Paul* would receive no Stipend from the *Corinthians*, tho' he loved them, and was beloved by them; this he did to shew that he was not like the false Apostles, who railed at him, and were themselves mercenary. This is an Example of Zeal, Prudence, and Disinterestedness, which ought to be imitated by all Pastors. IV. We should seriously attend to the Account which the Apostle here gives of his great Sufferings, and of so many Dangers and Persecutions he had passed through, and from which God had delivered him. This is a noble Proof of his Zeal, and the Truth of the Doctrine he Preached; but it likewise shews, that Christians ought not to be terrified at Afflictions, especially the Ministers of Jesus Christ, who should lastly consider very seriously, what *St. Paul* says, that he was continually taken up by the Care of the Churches, and that no evil could befall them but what afflicted, and as it were consumed him. 'Tis thus that Pastors ought to be employed Day and Night in the Duties of their Ministry, and be more attentive to what concerns the Edification of their Flocks than all other things besides.

C H A P. XII.

I. *St. Paul* continuing to speak of the Advantages that distinguished him from other Ministers, relates how he was carried up to Heaven; but does it after an exceeding humble Manner; by which it appears, he would not have

have mention'd it, if he had not been as it were forced to it. II. After this, he tells the *Corinthians* he would shortly come to them, and therefore as he had not been, so neither would he now be burdensome to 'em; he manifests an extreme Tenderneſs for 'em, declaring he would not have writ to 'em as he did, but for their Edification, and to the End that he might not be obliged to uſe 'em with ſeverity, when he ſhould arrive at *Corinth*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE raviſhment or carrying up of St. *Paul* into Heaven, which he mentions in this Chapter, was a glorious Privilege of this Apoſtle, demonſtrating the Divinity of his vocation, and certainty of the Life to come. The way in which St. *Paul* relates this matter, and the Excuses he makes in giving the Relation of it, ſhew that we may be allowed to ſpeak of the Favours God has beſtowed on us; but that we muſt not do it, ſave only when 'tis neceſſary for the Glory of God, and in an humble Senſe of our own unworthineſs, but by no means in a Way of boaiſting or extolling our ſelves. The Apoſtle ſays, God had put a Thorn in his Fleſh, to the End he might not be puffed up, on Account of the Revelations he had had in his Extacy; which imports that a bad Angel did, by the Permiſſion of God, cauſe him to feel very ſenſible Pains in his Body; this teaches us that we are in Danger of growing Proud, when any conſiderable advantage befalls us, and that 'tis neceſſary that God ſhould viſit even the holieſt Men with Afflictions, and matters of Mortification, to keep 'em humble. We have ſeen that though St. *Paul* prayed earneſtly to be delivered from this Thorn, yet the Lord did not hearken to him in that thing,

answering him, *My Grace is sufficient.* God does not always hear the Prayers, by which we beg to be delivered from the evils of the Body; but his Grace ought to satisfy us; and He leaves us under Sufferings, to the End we may become more sensible of his Strength in our Weakness. Lastly, the tender Love St. Paul bore to the *Corinthians*, and the Apprehension he had of being obliged to deal rigorously with those that did not amend, shew that Pastors ought tenderly to Love their Flocks, and that 'tis a Subject of Grief to 'em, to be forced to use the Severity of Censures and Discipline against such as did not repent, but nevertheless, they ought to do it as often as the Health of Sinners and the Edification of the Church render it necessary.

C H A P. XIII.

I. **T**H E Apostle acquaints the *Corinthians* again, that he designed to visit 'em; that he would not spare those who had not mended their Lives; and since some among 'em questioned his Authority, he would make 'em know by experience and by effects, that as Jesus Christ, though he had been a weak Man, governed by the Power of God; so likewise he himself, though he was look'd upon as a mean Person, yet had received from the Lord the Power and Authority of an Apostle of Christ. II. He exhorts 'em to examine and correct themselves, telling them he desired nothing so much as to find 'em in a good Condition, to the End that he might not be obliged to deal rigorously with them, though they should call in question his Character of an Apostle. He concludes with a general Exhortation to Amendment and Peace, and with hearty Wishes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may observe in this Chapter, the Zeal, and at the same time the Meekness, Charity, and Humility of *St. Paul*. This Apostle was resolved not to spare the Incorrigible; yet he wished the *Corinthians* might amend themselves, and not force him to use the Power he had received from Christ as an Apostle. In Imitation of him, the Ministers of Christ ought to be animated with a Spirit of Charity and Humility, and as much as they can, using Meekness instead of Severity. Nevertheless, they ought not to spare harden'd Sinners when there is an occasion for it. It appears likewise from thence, that 'tis more laudable and pleasing to God, that Christians should do their Duty willingly, and of their own accord, rather than to be compelled thereto by rigour and severity. *St. Paul* concludes this Epistle in exhorting the *Corinthians* to spiritual Joy, to Repentance and Peace, by these admirable Expressions: *Finally, Brethren, farewell, be ye perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace be with you. — The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.*



GALATIANS.



CHAP. I.



IN the Epistle to the *Galatians*, which was writ about the Year *Fifty one* of our Lord, St. Paul opposes those who taught, that in order to be saved, it was not enough to believe in *Jesus Christ*, but it was likewise necessary to be circumcised, and to keep the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. The Apostle proves against those People, that Christians are justified by Faith alone in *Jesus Christ*, without any Obligation of observing those Ceremonies. He afterwards exhorts the *Galatians* to continue in the same Liberty, but warns them against abusing it, and falling into Licentiousness.

In the *first* Chapter, St. Paul, after the Salutation, I. reproves the *Galatians* for departing from the Doctrine which he had taught them, which

which was the only Doctrine they ought to receive. II. He tells them in the next Place, that he had received this Doctrine from the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*; upon which Occasion, he puts them in Mind how zealous he had been formerly for the Ceremonies and Traditions of the *Jews*, but that God had called him to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that immediately after his Conversion, he had preached the Gospel in several Places, without consulting any Man, or any Apostle. *St. Paul* speaks thus, to shew that he was called by Christ only, and not by *St. Peter*, nor by any other Person, and that he had the same Authority as the rest of the Apostles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter presents us with two principal Reflexions. I. That Christians ought never to vary from the true Doctrine of the Gospel, which was preached and reduced to Writing by the Apostles, but that they ought to shun all those that would preach a Doctrine different from the same. II. The Account *St. Paul* gives of his Conversion, and what he says to prove that he had his Authority from *Jesus Christ*, obliges us, on the one Hand, to receive his Doctrine as Divine, and to submit to it; and on the other, to acknowledge the Power and Mercy of the Lord towards those who were in Ignorance and Error, of which we see an illustrious Example in the Conversion and Calling of *St. Paul* to the Office of an Apostle, who, before that, had been a declared Enemy of the Christian Religion, and a Persecutor of the Church.

C H A P. II.

I. **S**T. *Paul*, to support his Calling and Authority, and to shew that he was not inferior to any of the Apostles, says, that not only his Doctrine had been approved at *Jerusalem* by St. *Peter*, St. *James*, and St. *John*; but even that he had rebuked St. *Peter*, because that out of his too great Complaisance for the *Jews*, he durst not eat with those Gentiles, who had believed in Jesus Christ, which might have been an Occasion of encouraging the *Jews* in their Prejudices, and of obliging the *Gentiles* to be subject to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. II. He teaches next, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are justified by Faith only in Jesus Christ, but shews at the same Time, that his Doctrine is so far from favouring looseness of Life, that, on the contrary, Faith in Christ crucified draws Men from Sin, and causes them to lead a Life which is purely Spiritual.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have the two following Things to observe, for our Instruction, upon this Chapter: I. The Authority, Sincerity, and Zeal, with which St. *Paul* preached the pure Doctrine of the Gospel, so far as even to reprove St. *Peter* for his too great Complaisance to the *Jews*, which induced him to avoid all Correspondence with the Gentiles. This should convince all Christians, and especially Ministers of the Gospel, that they ought always to follow their Call, and to walk with uprightness, according to the Truth; and that we ought never to use any Subterfuges, or the least Dissimulation, in matters of Religion. II. St. *Paul* establishes in this Chapter, the Doctrines

Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone in Jesus Christ; but he teaches at the same Time, and very expressly too, that such Doctrine does by no means authorize Men to live in Sin; that, on the contrary, the true Faith by which we are Justified does necessarily destroy Sin in us, and causes us to live to God. This is what St. Paul teaches us by these Words, which so well describe the Condition and Sentiments of a true Believer in Jesus Christ; *I am Crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.* God grant us all these Thoughts. Amen.

C H A P. III.

I. ST. Paul blames the *Galatians* for departing from that Doctrine they had before embraced, and which teaches, that Men are justified by Faith in Christ without the Works of the Law; to shew that that was the only true Doctrine, he puts 'em in Mind, that when they received it, God was pleased to Communicate to them the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost. II. He proves by the Example of *Abraham*, by the Nature of the Promises which were made to him and his Posterity, and by the Curse which the Law denounces against those that should not perfectly fulfil it, that all Men, even the Gentiles themselves, must be justified by Faith in Christ; from whence it follows, that those who pretended to be justified by the Law, deprived themselves of these Promises, and continued under the Curse. III. He confirms the same by observing that the Law of *Moses*, which was not given till long after the Promise that God had made to *Abraham*, could

not be annulled by the said Promise ; but that God had given that Law by the Ministry of *Moses*, he being Mediator between God and the People, on Account of the Sins of the *Israelites*, until the Time that Christ should come ; and to prepare Men to receive the Grace which was to render them all Children of God, as well the *Gentiles* as the *Jews* ; according to the Promise that had been made to the Patriarch *Abraham*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to consider upon this Chapter, I. That it is a great Folly, and an extream Blindness, to turn aside from the Truth, and to end ill, after having begun well. II. That the wonderful Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were communicated to the first Christians, prove the Divinity of the Doctrine which they had embraced, and its Excellency above the Law. We see, III. the Proofs St. *Paul* alledges to shew, that it is by Faith in Christ that Men are justified, which Proofs are taken from the Example of *Abraham*, from the Promises God had made him, from the Curse which the Law denounced against the *Israelites*, and from the Time when the Law was given. This should induce us to own the Truth of St. *Paul's* Doctrine, since we find such solid Proofs of it in the Law it self, and in the Covenant which God had made with *Abraham*. We see likewise thereby, that God had given to this Apostle great Lights, and an extraordinary Wisdom. IV. And Lastly, the Wisdom and Goodness of God appear after a more sensible Manner, in his having given the Law to bring Men to Christ, till the Time should come, when He would receive them into his Covenant, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Let us from thence acknowledge, that since we are now be-
come

come the Children and Heirs of God, by Faith in Christ, we are bound to render Him a sincere and filial Obedience, and to discharge those Duties to which we are engaged by the Covenant of Grace, wherein we have the Happiness to live.

C H A P. IV.

THIS Chapter consists of three Parts. I. In the *First*, St. Paul shews by the Difference there was between the Condition of the *Jews* whilst under the Law, and their glorious State when they submitted to the Gospel, having the Happiness to be adopted the Children of God, how much the *Galatians* were to blame, in desiring to return to the Yoke of the *Mosaical* Ceremonies. II. He speaks in the second Part, of the great Affection which he bore them, and of that which they formerly had conceived for him, and shews them how uneasie he was on their Account. III. He represents the Difference there was between the Covenant of the Law, and that of the Gospel, and between those who adhered to the one or the other, under the Types of *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, the two Sons of *Abraham*; one of whom was born according to the Course of Nature, of *Hagar* that was a Servant; and the other given miraculously, and in Consequence of the Promise of God, by *Sarah*, who was a free Woman, and the Wife of *Abraham*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general aim of this Chapter is, I. To instruct us in the Difference there is between *Jews* and *Christians*, and to shew how

how Happy we are to live in the Times of the Gospel, and to have been adopted of God, to be his Children through Faith in Christ. This is a Doctrine which should excite in us a lively Sense of our Happiness, and great gratitude towards God; It ought likewise to inspire us with Sentiments worthy the Glory of our Adoption, and especially induce us to live as the Children of God, and to obey him willingly, and from a principle of Love. II. The Counsel St. *Paul* gave the *Galatians*, on Account of their still cleaving to the Ceremonies of the Law, proves that Pastors ought carefully to fortifie their Flocks against Error and Seduction; it also shews how blameworthy those Christians are, who having the Knowledge of the Gospel, apply themselves to the vain and frivolous Things of this World. III. We may have observed in this Chapter the extream Affection of St. *Paul* towards the *Galatians*, and the uneasiness he felt on their Account, as also the extraordinary respect and love which they had for him, having received him as an Angel of God. We see hereby how much the true Shepherds love the Church of the Lord, and how greatly they are grieved, when they find that their Sheep do not answer their Love and Care. This shews likewise, that Christians ought tenderly to cherish good and faithful Pastors; that they who have not these Sentiments, or who having once had them, do not preserve them, are very much to blame, as well as those who conceive an aversion for their Ministers, because they tell them the Truth.

CHAP. V.

TH E R E are two Parts in this Chapter. I. In the first, St. *Paul* exhorts the *Galatians* to continue in Christian Liberty, which he says, consists in their not being subject to Circumcision, and to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. He tells them that Christ would be of no Advantage to them, if they retain these Ceremonies, and advises them not to hearken to such as would suggest other Opinions to them, and even not to endure them among them. II. He exhorts them not to abuse this Liberty, nor to take Occasion from thence to live Licentiously, nor to follow the Desires of the Flesh. He recommends to them to love one another, and to live in Peace, and particularizes the Sins to which Men are carried by the Flesh, and the Fruits which the Holy Ghost produces in those he loves.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH I S is a Chapter that is very instructive, and we ought carefully to remember the Doctrine contained in it. St. *Paul* explains here very plainly, how we are to understand what he has taught in this Chapter, namely, that *we are justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law*. That is to say, Christians are not obliged to observe the Circumcision, nor the other Ceremonies of the Law; but that they are under an indispensable Obligation of leading a holy Life. The Apostle says, in the clearest and most positive manner, that the Faith which justifies, operates by Charity and good Works; and that we ought not to take occasion from our Christian Liberty to live in Licentiousness.

centiousness. He shews what a great difference there is between those that live according to the Flesh, and those that are animated by the Spirit of God; he specifies the Sins of the Flesh, the chief of which are Impurity, Sensuality, Disputes, and Divisions; and declares, that those who commit these Sins, shall never enjoy the Kingdom of God. He shews, *Lastly*, what are the Effects which the Spirit of God produces in true Believers. Let us apply these Instructions to our Advancement in Piety and Holiness; and let us shew by our Behaviour, that we are of the Number of those in whom God dwells, and who have crucified the Flesh with the Lusts thereof.

CHAP. VI.

I. **S**T. Paul exhorts the *Galatians*, to reprove with Meekness those that fall into any Fault, and to be animated towards them with a Spirit of Charity, Humility, and Forbearance. He exhorts them, II. To provide for the Subsistence of those that were their Teachers, and to exercise Charity. III. He concludes in advising them once again, not to hearken to those that would oblige them to be Circumcised, and makes a short recapitulation of his Doctrine, and of this whole Epistle.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. Paul teaches us in this Chapter, I. That we ought to bear and reprove with Meekness those who sin through Infirmary, considering them always as Brethren, and remembering that we likewise may be tempted, and that every one is accountable to God for himself, and must bear his own Burthen. II. That Christi-
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ans are obliged to provide for the Maintenance of their Pastors, and to do good to all Men, but especially to the Members of the Church. III. That these are indispensable Duties, and that God will have regard to the Manner of our Discharging them, as St. Paul shews, by saying: *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap.* Lastly, It must be observed and carefully remembered, what St. Paul says at the end of this Epistle, and which is the Summary of his whole Doctrine; viz. that God will not consider whether a Man be a Jew or a Gentile, whether he be circumcised or uncircumcised; but that what he chiefly requires is, that we become new Men and regenerated. This is the Meaning of the following Words: *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature. And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Amen.*

Ephesians.



Ephesians.



T. *Paul* writ this Epistle when he was a Prisoner at *Rome*, about the Year of our Lord, *Fifty six*. It consists of Two Parts. In the *first*, which is contained in the three first Chapters, he represents to the *Ephesians*, the Favour which God had shewed them, to receive them into his Covenant; them, I say, who for the most part were *Gentiles*. In the *second*, he exhorts them to Holiness, and instructs them in the principal Duties of the Christian Life, as he does likewise in the three last Chapters.

C H A P. I.

I. **T**H E Apostle returns Thanks to God for having chosen the *Ephesians* to Salvation, and for having given them the Knowledge of Christ, and the Blessings of the Holy Ghost. II. He prays the Lord to increase those Lights and Gifts, and that He would give them the Grace
rightly

rightly to comprehend the Excellency of their Vocation, and the Glory to which they were called in *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E beginning of this Epistle teaches us,
 I. That the greatest Good that God ever shewed to Men was, to give them the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, and the Hopes of Salvation.
 II. That the Spring of this great Favour, and all the spiritual Blessings we enjoy, is the sole Mercy of God, who has vouchsafed to elect us to Salvation in his Son.
 III. That our Hearts ought to be affected by so precious a Kindness, and that we should praise God continually for it, saying with *St. Paul*: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ.*
 IV. That the Design which God proposed to Himself in thus choosing and calling us to his Knowledge was, to render us holy and unreprieveable before Him in Love; and that accordingly, Holiness ought to be our chief Study, as it is the only Means of arriving at Glory.
 V. The Wishes and Prayers which *St. Paul* makes for the *Ephesians* teach us, that it is not sufficient to have been once enlightened by the Gospel, and to have had some Sense of the Grace of God, but that we should always go on increasing in Good, for which purpose, we ought to pray to God, that He would manifest in us more and more the Power and Strength of his Grace.
 VI. And *Lastly*, since all our Happiness depends, as *St. Paul* has assured us in strong Terms, in understanding rightly the Excellence of the divine Call, and of the good Things in Heaven, we ought continually to meditate upon them, and always to
 make

make this noble wish: *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto us the Spirit of Wisdom, — to the End that the Eyes of our Understanding being enlighten'd, we may know the Hope of his Calling, and what are the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. Amen.*

C H A P. II.

IN this Chapter the Apostle shews, I. That at the Time when all Men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were dead in their Sins, God saved them by Jesus Christ; and he observes particularly, that they were indebted for this great Benefit to the sole Mercy of God, who had delivered them from such their State of Condemnation and Corruption, and had given them the Capacity of doing good Works. II. He then represents to the *Ephesians*, who were formerly *Heathens*, and excluded from the Covenant of God, that the favour that God had shewn them, in removing the Distinction which was between them and the *Jews*, and in reuniting them so as to be no longer but one only People, and from thenceforwards, to compose all of them together but one only House, and one only Temple devoted to the Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to consider here, I. That all Men without exception, were naturally in Corruption and Condemnation, and Dead in their Sins; but that they are delivered from such a dismal State, and raised to the Hope of eternal Life through the great Mercy of God, and by the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. From whence it follows, that if we be saved, it is by the pure Bounty of God,
and

and does not proceed from our selves. But this Doctrine shews us likewise, that the Design of God was to bring Men off from their Corruption, and to Sanctifie them; and that although we be not saved by Works, yet *God has created us unto Christ Jesus into good Works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them*, as St. Paul says. II. We see in this Chapter, that the Distinction which there was formerly between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is abolished, since Christ has caused Salvation to be preached unto the *Gentiles*, who were out of his Covenant, as well as to the *Jews*. This Doctrine should produce in us, who are derived from the Heathens, a profound acknowledgment of the Goodness of God, and make us *remember that we were in Time passed Gentiles in the Flesh, — having no Hope, and without God in the World: But now are made nigh by the Blood of Christ; so that we are no more Strangers, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God*. So great a Favour obliges us to great gratitude, and to live after a manner suitable to the Glory of our Condition, and to the happy State, in which it has pleased God to place us.

C H A P. III.

I. **A**FTER St. Paul had taught us in the foregoing Chapter, that the *Gentiles* composed but one People with the *Jews*, he tells the *Ephesians* that he was in Bonds, for having preached this Doctrine, which was formerly a hidden Mystery, but was revealed to the Apostles by the Holy Ghost; and he exhorts the *Ephesians* not to be disheartened at the Afflictions he endured, and which were so glorious to them as well as to him. II. He next beseeches God to confirm them in his Calling,

to strengthen them in Faith, Charity, and all kind of spiritual Gifts, and give them the Grace of knowing more and more the greatness and wonderfulness of the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflexions after the Reading.

SINCE St. Paul teaches us in this Chapter, that the Calling of the *Gentiles* was a Mystery unknown before the Coming of Christ, we should bless God with all our Heart, not only that we live in a Time, in which this Mystery is manifested, but particularly that we are of those Nations which were formerly in the Darkness of Idolatry, but which do now partake of the Promises of God by the Gospel, insomuch that we have at present access to God by Christ with Confidence. Let us continually meditate upon so great a Mercy; Let us apply our selves to know truly, and be entirely sensible of the Extent of this wonderful Love of our Lord, to the End we may be thereby more and more excited to love Him, and aspire to the Glory He has prepared for us; for which purpose let us beseech Him with St. Paul, to grant us, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner Man; that Christ may dwell in our Hearts by Faith; that we being Rooted and Grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge, that we may be filled with all the Fulness of God. Amen.

C H A P. IV. 1,—16.

ST. *Paul* begins by exhorting the *Ephesians* to the Duties of a Christian Life, recommending to them, before all Things, Peace and Concord. To induce them to it, he shews, I. That all Christians enjoy in common the same spiritual Advantages. II. That the different Gifts which Christ has granted to Men, do all tend to the Edification of the Church. And, III. that it is chiefly in this View, that he established, after ascending into Heaven, divers Orders of Ministers, and that the end of the Ministry was, to confirm Christians in the Truth, and in Holiness, and to guide them by these Means to Perfection and Salvation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FR O M this Chapter we may gather these three Instructions. I. That being all Members of the same Body, having all of us the same Faith, the same Hope, the same God, and the same Saviour, we ought to live in Peace and in perfect Unity. II. That since our Lord has distributed different Gifts to Men, and has particularly appointed, after his Ascension, extraordinary Ministers, such as the Apostles; and ordinary Ministers, such as Pastors and Teachers, we are bound to acknowledge the Necessity and Advantage of the Ministry, to make a right Use of it, and by its means to improve in Faith, in Piety, and Charity. III. The third Instruction is, that Christians should not be like wavering and fickle Children, nor give credit to all kinds of Doctrines, and to all that corrupt and designing Men may insinuate into them; but that they should be steady in

their Belief, and for that purpose, adhere inviolably to the Gospel, and to the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, which alone can lead them to Perfection and eternal Happiness.

C H A P. IV. 17, — 32.

ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Ephesians* not to live as they had done before their Conversion to Christianity, and as the *Heathens* still did; but to lead a Life entirely new, and conformable to the Precepts of the Gospel of Christ. He warns them particularly to shun Impurity, and that Dissoluteness to which the *Heathens* gave themselves up; as they did likewise to Lying, Theft, Wrath, obscene Discourses, Slander, and all other sinful Passions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us improve these Exhortations which we have read, and learn from hence in general, that the Christian Religion calls us to Holiness, and that it is by no means allowed to Christians, who have been instructed in the Truth by *Jesus Christ*, to live like the *Gentiles*, that were involved in Ignorance, and that for want of knowing God, abandoned themselves to all kinds of Disorders. Let us therefore remember, that the Design of the Gospel is, that *We put off the old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Lusts.* — *And that we put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness.* We see likewise besides, what are the particular Sins which *St. Paul* condemns as altogether unworthy of Christians. It is first, Impurity, and all kinds of Pollution; next, Lying and Deceiving, Injustice and Theft; Idleness, lascivious and handsome

handsome Speeches, such as scandalize our Neighbour, and grieve the Spirit of God; and lastly, Anger, Bitterness, and Calumny. Let us avoid all these Sins; let us study Purity, Sincerity, Justice, and Meekness; to the end that we may bear the Image of our Heavenly Father, and that He may own us for the Disciples of his Son *Jesus Christ*. God grant us his Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. V. I, — 21.

IN this Chapter we see, I. Exhortations to Charity and Purity. II. *St. Paul*, to dissuade the *Ephesians* from Impurity, declares to them, that that Sin would draw down upon Men the Wrath of God; and he represents to them, that God had delivered them from the Darkness of *Paganism*, by enlightening them with the Light of the Gospel. III. He advises them to behave with Prudence, to redeem the Time, and to avoid the Excess of Wine and prophane Mirth; and lastly, exhorts them to spiritual Joy, and to Thanksgivings.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to learn here, I. That the Character of Children of God, which we bear, obliges us to imitate Him, especially in his Love, and in his Goodness, and to walk in the Steps of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who gave himself for us. II. That Christians ought to have so much horror for Impurity, that it should not be so much as named among them; that they ought never to pronounce any free or foolish Words, nor such as are contrary to Modesty; but that all their Discourses ought to be grave and edifying. III. That those who

suffer themselves to be carried away by these Sins, bring upon themselves the Wrath of God, and will have no part in his Kingdom. IV. That the light of the Gospel, which has shined upon us, delivering us from the Darkness of Paganism, does not allow us to imitate the *Heathens* in their Disorders, and that far from partaking of the Sins of the World, we are rather obliged to reprove them. V. That Christians ought to govern themselves with Wisdom and Precaution, and to make a good Use of Time. And, Lastly, that Intemperance and Drunkenness are most odious Vices, and should never be admitted by Christians; and that instead of abandoning our selves to Sensuality, and to carnal and profane Pleasures, we should seek after that spiritual Joy which the Holy Ghost produces, and which excites us to edifie one another, and to praise God continually in Heart and Mouth; *giving thanks always for all things, unto God, and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

C H A P. V. 22,—33.

And C H A P. VI. 1,—9.

ST. Paul prescribes here, I. The Duties of Wives and Husbands. II. Those of Children and Parents: And, III. Those of Servants and Masters.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Duties here prescribed are very important, and absolutely necessary for the Happiness of Families and Edification of the Church. We see here, I. That Husbands and Wives ought to live together in perfect Harmony and Concord, since, as St. Paul says, the Union

Union between *Christ* and his Church, is a Type of that which ought to be between Married Persons. The Duty of Husbands in particular, is to love their Wives, as *Christ* loved his Church; and that of Wives, is to honour their Husbands, and to be in Subjection to them, considering for that Purpose, that this Subjection is represented by that of the Church with respect to *Christ*. II. We see in the next Place, that Children are obliged, by the Command of God, to obey their Fathers and Mothers according to the Lord; and that Parents, on the other Hand, are bound to take care of their Children, especially to Educate them in the Fear of God, and to keep them under his Discipline. III. As for Servants, their Condition engages them to obey their Masters, and to serve them faithfully, whether absent or present. On the other Hand, Masters should treat their Domesticks with gentleness and equity, remembering that there is a Master in Heaven, to whom they are subject as well as their Servants, and who has no respect of Persons. And they ought to consider, Lastly, that *St. Paul's* intention was, that if Masters should have these charitable Considerations for their Servants, who in those Times were mostly *Gentiles*, and were Slaves besides; Masters are now-a-days much more obliged to perform the same Duties, since their Servants are free Persons, and Christians as well as themselves. God grant us the Grace to discharge these mutual Duties, each of us according to our Condition and Calling.

C H A P. VI. 10, — 24.

ST. *Paul* represents to the *Ephesians*, I. That since they were not only to fight against weak Men, but likewise against all that is Pow-

erful in the World, and even against their spiritual Enemies, and against the evil Angels ; they ought to be cloathed and armed with Faith, Righteousness, Hope, Prayer, and the Word of God, to the end that they may resist and overcome their Enemies. II. He concludes this Epistle, by recommending himself to the Prayers of the *Ephesians*, and likewise by praying for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read engages us to consider, I. That our Condition in this Life, in which we are exposed to divers Dangers, but especially to our spiritual Enemies, and to the Temptations with which we are surrounded, obliges us to stand upon our Guard, to resist those Enemies, and to secure our selves from the Snares of the Devil. That for this purpose, we ought always to confirm and strengthen our selves in Faith, in Truth, and in Hope ; to read and meditate continually upon the Word of God, and to pray with Zeal and Perseverance. That which is said about the end of this Epistle, teaches us moreover that Christians are obliged, by the Love they owe to *Jesus Christ*, and for their own Interest, to pray for those who preach the Word of God, and who labour to promote his Kingdom ; and that Pastors on their side, ought likewise to pray for their Flocks, and to put up the same Wishes in their behalf, as *St. Paul* did for the *Ephesians*, namely: *Peace be to the Brethren, and Love with Faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Christ in Sincerity. Amen.*

Philippians,



Philippians.



T. *Paul* writ this Epistle, as well as the former, while he was a Prisoner at *Rome*, about the Year of Christ *Fifty six*, to thank the Christians of the City of *Philippi* for the Assistance they had sent him to *Rome* by *Epaphroditus*, one of their Pastors. He informs them of his Condition, and gives them several Exhortations.

CHAP. I.

I. **S**T. *Paul* begins by Thanksgivings and Prayers, which he makes for the Confirmation of the *Philippians* in Faith and Holiness. II. He tells them that his Imprisonment had contributed towards promoting the Gospel in the City of *Rome*. III. He declares he was disposed to glorifie Christ, whether by Life or Death, and that he only desired to live for the Advantage

tage of the Church. IV. He exhorts the *Philippians* to a Behaviour worthy of the Gospel, and to Patience in Afflictions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E see from the very Entrance of this Epistle, by the Wishes and Prayers which the Apostle offers up to God for the *Philippians*, and by the Proofs he gives them of his Love, the great Zeal and perfect Charity with which he abounded. This is a Lesson to Pastors, to love their Flocks with a cordial Affection in *Christ Jesus*, and to pray to God incessantly for the entire Sanctification of the Faithful. II, We ought to admire the Ways of Providence, which was pleased that *St. Paul* should be imprisoned at *Rome*, to the end that he might have an opportunity to preach the Gospel there, and that his Suffering might serve to excite the Zeal of many Persons: 'Tis thus, that what the Enemies of the Truth do to destroy it, helps often to spread it the more. III. We see that tho' there were People who preached the Gospel out of Envy and Jealousie, with respect to *St. Paul*, yet he rejoiced because the Gospel was thereby promoted. God sometimes makes use even of Persons who do not act upon a good Principle, to perform his Work; but however it be done, those who, like *St. Paul*, are animated with a true Zeal, are pleased with it, even tho' it be a Prejudice to themselves. IV. The Sentiments of this Apostle concerning Life and Death, are such as all Christians ought to entertain; who should always be ready both to live and to die for the Glory of God; their Desire is to leave the World, that they may be with the Lord; and if they wish to live, it is only that they may be useful to the Church, and
to

to their Neighbours. *Finally*, This Place of the Epistle to the *Philippians* proves clearly, that the Faithful are happy with the Lord after their Death, and waiting for the Resurrection. V. The Close of this Chapter shews, that the Duty of all Christians is, to behave after a manner worthy of the Gospel, and not to be moved at Afflictions, especially when they undergo them for the sake of Christ.

CHAP. II. 1,—13.

I. **S**T. *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* very affectionately, to Concord and Humility. II. To which end he proposes the Example of Christ's Humiliation, and of the Glory to which he was afterwards exalted. And, III. He represents to them, that this is an inducement to labour for their Salvation with Humility and Perseverance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That one of the most important Duties of Religion is, that Christians should be animated with true Charity; that they should live together in perfect Unity, and in a Spirit of Humility, and that they should promote the Interests of others as well as their own. II. *St. Paul* sets here before our Eyes the profound Humiliation of *Jesus Christ*, who, tho' he was equal to God, abased himself, even to the Death of the Cross, and who by his Obedience and Sufferings was exalted to supream Glory. The Apostle proposes us this Example, to teach us, that if we have the same Sentiments as our Saviour had, we shall likewise attain to Glory. III. This serious Exhortation, *Work out your own*

own Salvation with fear and trembling, should inspire us all with a great Zeal, to labour continually in the Work of our Salvation; making use for that purpose, of the Means which God offers to us, among which, one of the most effectual is, to have recourse to Him by Prayer, forasmuch as it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

C H A P. II. 14, — 30.

I. **S**T. Paul exhorts the *Philippians* to live in Peace, and by a pure and innocent Behaviour, to edifie those among whom they lived; and he assures them he would suffer Death with joy, if it were necessary for the Confirmation of their Faith. II. He promises to send *Timothy* to them, whose Zeal and Faithfulness he praises. He likewise recommends to them *Ephroditus*, who was going back to them after recovering from a great Sicknes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may here make three Reflexions. I. That Christians ought to avoid Quarrels and Disputes, and distinguish themselves by an unblameable Behaviour, so that they may shine like burning Lights in a crooked and perverse Generation. II. St. Paul's Declaration, that he was ready to sacrifice his Blood and his Life with Pleasure, for the Edification of the *Philippians*, shews, that the true Ministers of Christ are entirely devoted to the Service of God and of his Church; that this is the end of all their Labours; and that when it is necessary to lose even their Lives for the Advancement of the Salvation of Men, they ought to lay them down with gladness. III. The Testimony which

which the Apostle gives of the Sincerity and great Zeal of *Timothy*; what he says of *Epaphroditus*, of his Sickness and Recovery, and the earnest manner in which he recommends him to the *Philippians*, shews, that true Pastors, and such as only seek the Interests of Christ, and who discharge their Function with Zeal and Sincerity, deserve all the Love, and all the Esteem of Christians; that the Life and Conversation of such ought to be very dear to the Church, that they ought to be received with all Demonstrations of Joy, and to be highly esteemed by their People, who should submit to their Instructions and Exhortations.

CHAP. III.

I. **S**T. *Paul* advises the *Philippians* not to hearken to false Doctors, who preached up the Observation of the Circumcision, and boasted of the external Advantages that distinguish'd the *Jews* from other Nations. II. He shews by his Example, that all those Advantages were unprofitable, and even prejudicial to Salvation; and he says, that it was for that reason he had renounced them, to adhere to Christ alone; and that he continually endeavour'd to advance more and more in the Knowledge of our Lord, and to attain to Perfection. III. He exhorts the *Philippians* to come into his Sentiments, and to avoid their false Teachers, whose Character he describes, by saying, that they were carnal Men; whereas true Christians are spiritual Men, and do only aim at Heaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to observe in general in this whole Chapter, that as *St. Paul* exhorted the *Philippians* to beware of false Teachers, who endeavour'd to enslave them to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*, it is very necessary that Christians should fortifie themselves against Error, and all that is contrary to the Purity of Faith. Besides which, we may gather from this Chapter, that true Christians are distinguishable by these three Tokens. I. The *first* is, that they have the same Opinions of the Things of the World, as *St. Paul* had for the external Advantages he possess'd, when he was a *Jew*; that is to say, that they do not at all value those Things in comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ their Lord, and that they consider them even as hurtful, when they hinder them from following their Call. II. The *second* Character of true Christians is, that in imitation of *St. Paul*, they aim at Perfection, leaving the Things which are behind them, advancing towards those before them, and by continual endeavours aspiring to the Mark and Prize of their Calling in *Christ Jesus*. III. The *third* Token of the Faithful is, that whereas carnal Men do only love the Things of the World, and have no other God but their Belly; true Christians live after a spiritual and heavenly manner, behaving themselves as those whose Country is Heaven, from whence they expect their Lord and Saviour, who will come from thence to raise them up, and to receive them into the Glory of his Kingdom.

CHAP. IV.

THIS Chapter consists of two Parts. I. The first contains Exhortations to Perseverance, Unity, and spiritual Joy ; to Trust in God, and to a holy Life. II. In the second, St. Paul thanks the *Philippians* for the Contributions they had sent him for his Subsistence in Prison ; and prays for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE first Part of this Chapter instructs us in these *five* Duties. The *first* is, to persevere continually in the Pureness of Faith, and in Piety. The *second*, To live in Unity with each other, and above all, to be of the same Opinion in matters of Religion. The *third*, To rejoice always in God with a spiritual Joy. The *fourth*, Not to be full of the Cares of this Life, but to have recourse to God by Prayer in all our Wants, and to trust his Providence. The *fifth* Duty is of a very great Extent ; it is to adhere constantly to all Things that are honest, pure, holy, virtuous, and praise-worthy. II. There may likewise be two Reflexions made upon the second Part of this Chapter. *First*, St. Paul teaches us here, by his Example, to be content in whatever State and Condition we find ourselves, whether we be in Poverty, or whether we be in Plenty. *Secondly*, The Thanks which this Apostle returns the *Philippians* for what they had sent him, shews a great Disinterestedness, and at the same time no less Gratitude ; and the Prayers he offers to God for them upon that Occasion teach us, that it is a Work
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very agreeable to God, to assist such as are in Want, and particularly the Servants of God, and those that suffer for the Gospel; that these Works of Charity rejoice and comfort good Men, and that they are Sacrifices of a sweet Odour, which God accepts, and which He rewards, according to the Riches of his Grace, with Glory in *Jesus Christ*.



Colossians.



Colossians.



THIS is likewise an Epistle which St. Paul writ whilst he was a Prisoner at Rome the first Time. The Design of it, is to Exhort the *Colossians*, not to suffer themselves to be seduced by certain false Teachers, who would perswade them to joyn the Jewish Ceremonies to the Christian Faith. This is the Subject of the Two first Chapters. In the Two last, he prescribes the principal Duty of Piety and Holiness.

C H A P. I.

THIS Chapter consists of two Parts. I. St. Paul praises God that the Gospel had been preached to the *Colossians*, and for the great Fruits it had produced among them; and he beseeches the Lord to fill them more and more with the Knowledge of his Will, and with all kinds of spiritual Gifts, to the End that they may behave in a Manner worthy of the Lord.

II. The Apostle represents, that *Christ* is the only Fountain of Salvation, that in Him the Fulness of the God-head dwells, that Mankind, and the *Gentiles* especially, had been perfectly reconciled to God by his Means. St. *Paul* speaks thus to the *Colossians*, to convince them that the Doctrine of *Christ* was sufficient for Salvation, without any necessity of Stopping at the Law of *Moses*, and that the Sufferings which he himself endured, as well as those which they might likewise be exposed to, ought not to move them in the Profession of the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Thanksgivings with which St. *Paul* begins this Epistle, engage us continually to praise God for having caused the Gospel to be preached to us, and by this Means for *delivering us from the Power of Darkeness, and translating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* The Prayers St. *Paul* joyns to these Thanksgivings teach us, that it is not enough to have received the Faith in some degree only, but that we ought to aim at perfection, and to beg of God that He would continually increase his Knowledge, and the Gifts of his Spirit in us. These Prayers of the Apostle instruct us farther, that the Purpose for which God grants us this Knowledge is, that we should govern ourselves after a Manner worthy of the Lord, that we should endeavour to please Him entirely, and bring forth the Fruits of all sort of good Works. II. We see in the second Part of this Chapter, that *Christ* is the only Author of Salvation, that the Fulness of the God-head dwells in Him, that he is very God and very Man, and that it is by Him, that God has been pleased to reconcile all Men to Himself. What we are to gather
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ther from hence is, that we are only to seek for Salvation in *Christ Jesus*, by continually persevering in Faith and Obedience to the Gospel, and that no Temptation whatever should be able to turn us away from it.

CHAP. II.

I. **S**T. *Paul* testifies to the *Colossians*, that the Fear he was under, lest they should suffer themselves to be drawn away, by those who endeavour'd to introduce the Subtilties of Philosophy, and the Traditions of the *Jews*, into the Christian Religion, obliged him to make Use of these Exhortations. II. For this reason he continues to represent to them, that in *Christ Jesus* every thing was found that was necessary to justify and sanctify Men, and consequently, that the Ceremonies of the *Jews* were useless, and had been abolished by the Death of Christ. III. He concludes from thence, that Christians are no longer bound to observe these Ceremonies, and that they ought not to listen to those who would restrain them to a Distinction of Meats and Days, to the Worship of Angels, and to several Vain and Superstitious Practices.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE great Zeal St. *Paul* shews at the beginning of this Chapter for the *Colossians*, and his Apprehensions of their being seduced by false Doctors, teaches us, I. That the Ministers of the Gospel ought carefully to secure their Flocks from Error and Seduction; and that Christians ought themselves to stand upon their Guard, and to beware that they be not diverted from the pure Faith, by the Subtilties or Doctrines invented by Men. II. We

see here, that the true Means of preventing such Seduction, is to stick to *Christ* only, and to his Gospel, and to look upon Him as one that has perfectly attoned for our Sins, and in whom we find all that is necessary to our Salvation. III. It ought to be observed, that when *St. Paul* says, that *Christ* has by his Death done away the Obligations that were against us, and which consisted in the Legal ordinances, having entirely abolisht them, this only relates to Circumcision and the Ceremonies which God had formerly prescribed to the *Jews*; but that He has not freed us from the Obligation of keeping the Commandments of God; that, on the contrary, He dy'd to enable us to observe them better, and to communicate his Grace to us after a much more perfect Manner than the *Mosaical* Ceremonies were able to do. Lastly, We learn from this Chapter, that it is a very dangerous thing to introduce voluntary Worshipps, and such as are invented by Men, and vain and superstitious Customs, though they even carry with them some Appearance of Devotion into our holy Religion; but that we should always confine our selves to the Gospel, and adhere to that true and solid Piety which is there prescribed, and which consists in a pure Faith, and in a Renunciation of the World, of Sin, and of the Desires of the Flesh.

C H A P. III. and IV. v. I.

I. **S**T. *Paul* shews that Faith in *Christ* raised from the Dead, engages Christians to seek for the Things of Heaven, and to renounce those Sins that reigned among the Gentiles, and particularly Uncleannefs. II. He exhorts them next to Goodness, Humility, mutual Pardon,

don, Charity, Peace, and to glorifie God by their Speeches, by their Praises, and by their whole Behaviour. III. He shews, lastly, the Duties of Wives and Husbands, of Children and Parents, of Servants and Masters.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have seen the Duties to which this Chapter engages us. I. *St. Paul* shews here in general, that if we truly believe that *Christ* is risen, and that He sits on the right Hand of God, we shall not set our Hearts upon Worldly things, but shall conceive a great Affection for the Things of Heaven. II. The Apostle specifies next, the Things which Christianity obliges to renounce: such as first, all kind of Impurity and Pollutions, whether in Actions or Desires; and Secondly, Wrath, Calumny, dishonest Speeches, Lying, and in general, all the Vices of corrupt Nature. He shews the Virtues and principal Duties of the Christian Life, which are to abound in Mercy, Goodness, Meekness and Humility, to bear with, and pardon one another, to be very Charitable, to edifie by good Discourses, to be continually rendring Thanks to God our Father, and so to behave our selves, that all our Words and all our Actions may tend to his Glory. III. With these general Duties *St. Paul* recites the particular ones, to which Wives and Husbands, Children and Parents, Servants and Masters, are mutually obliged. 'Tis for us to practise all these Precepts, which are so Just, and so Worthy the Religion we profess, and to discharge all these Duties, whether in our general Calling, as Christians, or whether in the particular State and Condition in which God has placed us.

C H A P. IV.

I. **T**H E Apostle exhorts the *Colossians* to persevere in Piety, and to behave wisely, and to speak with Prudence and Meekness upon all Occasions. II. He recommends *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*, whom he sent to them, and concludes his Epistle by Salutations and some Advices.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH I S Chapter engages us to the Three following Duties: I. To pray continually; to persevere in that holy Exercise, and in Thanksgivings, and particularly, to pray for the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, to the End that they may Preach the Gospel after such manner as it ought to be Preached. II. The second Duty, is to be very Prudent, and to redeem the Time, especially when we have to do with Persons who have an Aversion to Truth and Holiness; to discourse always with Wisdom and Gentleness, and after such a Manner as is most proper for Edification; and to avoid every thing that may expose us to Danger, without necessity, or give Offence to any one whatever. Lastly, The good Character St. Paul gives *Tychicus*, *Onesimus*, *Mark*, *Jesus*, *Epaphras*, and St. *Luke*, who were all of 'em excellent Servants of God, and the Manner in which he recommends them to the *Colossians*, is a Lesson to all Christians, to shew great Love to the faithful Ministers of *Christ*, who ought to be received by the Church with all kind of Respect and Affection.

I. *Thessalonians.*



I. *Thessalonians.*



It is thought that this Epistle is the oldest of all, it having been writ by *St. Paul* in the *Fiftieth* Year of Christ. In the three first Chapters, the Apostle signifies how much he had been rejoiced to hear of the good State of the *Thessalonians*, and their Steadiness in Persecutions. He likewise informs them of his Condition. In the two last, he exhorts them to Piety and Holiness.

C H A P. I.

St. Paul praises God, I. That the *Thessalonians* had received the Gospel with Faith and Zeal. And, II. That their Church was a Pattern to all the Churches of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Satisfaction and Gladness with which St. Paul was affected at the happy State of the *Thessalonians*, and at the Account he had received of their Faith, Charity, and Patience, and the Thanks he renders to God for it, shew, that what chiefly recommends Churches is, when Faith, and all kind of Virtues, flourish therein, and that this is likewise the greatest subject of Joy and Comfort to the faithful Servants of God. For which purpose, the Church of *Thessalonica*, which was formerly an Example to the rest, may be proposed for a Pattern to all Christian Churches. We should likewise apply to our selves what St. Paul said to the *Thessalonians*, touching their Conversion to the Christian Religion; since, like them, we also, through the Mercy of God, have been delivered from the Darknes of Heathenism, and *are turned to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the Dead, even J E S U S, which deliver'd us from the Wrath to come.*

C H A P. II.

ST. Paul does three Things in this Chapter. I. He puts the *Thessalonians* in Mind, that he had preached the Gospel to them with sincerity, and without any view of Interest; that to the end he might not be burthensome to them, he had supported himself by his own labour, and that he had always exhorted them to live after such a manner as was worthy of that God, who had called them. II. He blesses God for having made his Ministry effectual among them, and for their having undergone with so much

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Constancy the Persecutions which at that time were every where raised against the Christians by the *Jews*, whose hatred of the Gospel he here describes. III. He shews the Desire he had to see the *Thessalonians*, and the ardent Affection he bore them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Ministers of the Gospel should learn by St. *Paul's* Example, to exercise their Office with Integrity ; to preach the pure Word of God without any Motives of Interest or Vain-glory ; to make appear in all their Actions an entire Disinterestedness, and a perfect Meekness; to behave themselves piously and without reproach, and continually to exhort Christians to a Conduct worthy of God, who calls them to his Kingdom, and to his Glory. II. We see in this Chapter, that the Duty of those to whom the Word of God is preach'd, is to receive it, not as the Word of Man, but as the divine Word ; and not to be discouraged at Persecutions and Gainsayings, to which they might be exposed ; but to suffer them with the same Constancy as St. *Paul* and the *Thessalonians* endured those which the *Jews* had raised against them. III. What is here said, that the *Jews* were the open Enemies of the Gospel, and that they fulfilled the Measure of their Crimes, should make us deplore the Infidelity of that Nation, which continues even till now ; and likewise induce us to pray for their Conversion. We see moreover hereby, that there have been in all Times Persons that set themselves against the Gospel, and therefore we must not be surprised if we find the like among the Christians of these latter Ages. The last Verses of this Chapter, in which St. *Paul* tells

tells us, that the *Thessalonians* were his Joy before the Lord, shews how sensible and tender that Affection is, which Pastors ought to conceive for their Flocks; from whence we may gather, that there is no Joy comparable to that which true Ministers feel when they see the Fruits of their Ministry; and that as the Faithful are all their Hope, and all their Joy, they will also be their Crown of Glory at the Coming of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

C H A P. III.

T H E R E is spoken in this Chapter, I. Of the Care *St. Paul* took of sending *Timothy* from *Athens* to *Thessalonica*, to inform himself of the Condition of the *Thessalonians*, and to strengthen them. II. Of the great Comfort the Apostle received from the good News which *Timothy* brought him; upon which occasion he makes very fervent Wishes for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. T H E great Concern *St. Paul* had for the Church of *Thessalonica*, and the Care he took to send *Timothy* to comfort and confirm the Christians of that City, shews, that Pastors ought to be continually employed about the Wants of their Flocks, and to provide for their Edification by all possible Means. II. The Comfort *St. Paul* felt in being informed by *Timothy* of the Perseverance of the *Thessalonians* in Faith and Holiness, and the Thanks he renders to God upon the same Account in this Chapter, is a Proof that nothing more sensibly affects the faithful Servants of *Jesus Christ*, nor gives them greater Pleasure, than when they see the good State of those o-
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ver whom God has appointed them, and that this ought to be the principal Subject of their Prayers and Thanksgivings. This is also what we should do with the utmost Zeal we can for our own Salvation, and for the Advancement of the Glory of God, as well as for the Consolation of our Guides, who ask the like Favour of God on our behalf, in the following Words of St. Paul: *The Lord make you to increase and abound in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you; to the end He may stablish your Hearts unblameable in Holiness before God even our Father, at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints.*

C H A P. IV.

TH E R E are two Things to be observed in this Chapter. I. Exhortations to a holy Life, and especially to Chastity and Charity. II. St. Paul shews, that Christians ought not to grieve excessively for the Dead; and in this View, he speaks of what shall happen both to the Dead and Living at the last Day, and how they shall be taken up into Heaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. Paul teaches us in this Chapter, I. That the chief Duty of Christians is, to behave themselves in such a manner as is agreeable to God, to keep the Commandments we have received from our Lord, and to abound more and more in Piety. II. That the Will of God is, that we should be holy, that we should avoid Impurity, and evil Concupiscence, that every one should know how to keep his Body in Chastity, that no Body ought to violate the Rules of Modesty, of Charity, and of Justice, to gratify

tifie the inordinate Desires of the Flesh ; that God is the Avenger of those Sins, and that they are unworthy of us, since God has not called us to Uncleanneſs, but to Holineſs. *St. Paul* teaches us, III. That true Chriſtians do not want to be exhorted to Charity, ſince they are taught by God to love one another ; and to the end that we may exerciſe Charity, every one ought to keep within the Bounds of his Calling, to apply himſelf to his own Buſineſs, and to avoid Idleneſs and Curioſity. *Laſtly*, We ſee in this Chapter, that we ought not to afflict our ſelves for the Dead, *as Men without Hope*, ſince we know that thoſe who die in the Lord, ſhall riſe again to be carried up into Heaven upon the Clouds, in order to meet Him, together with thoſe who ſhall be then alive. This Doctrinè ought to comfort us for the Death of ſuch Perſons as are dear to us, to confirm our ſelves againſt the Fear of Death, and to excite us to live to the Lord, to the end, that dying likewiſe to Him, we may be raiſed again one Day, and render'd partakers of the heavenly Glory. May Chriſt himſelf grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. V.

ST. Paul does three Things in this Chapter. I. He ſpeaks of the laſt Coming of Chriſt, and exhorts the Chriſtians to prepare themſelves for it, by Sobriety and Watchfulneſs. II. He preſcribes to the *Theſſalonians* ſeveral Duties of Piety. III. He concludes his Epistle, by praying God for their Sanctification, and recommending himſelf to their Prayers.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That the Day of the Lord will come in a very sudden Manner, surprizing Men when they least expect it; that it will be a Day of Terror for those who walk in Darkneſs, and give themſelves up to the Works of the Fleſh; but that the ſame Day will be very comfortable to Believers; and that therefore the Way not to be ſurprized by it is, to prepare ourſelves for it by a ſober Life, by Faith, by the Practice of Charity, and all kind of good Works. II. St. Paul does next preſcribe ſeveral particular Duties, ſuch as the edifying and exhorting one another by good Diſcourſes; honouring Paſtors, and ſhewing great Love for them; living in Peace among our ſelves; adviſing, comforting, and forbearing each other; avoiding Revenge; rejoicing always with ſpiritual Joy; praying continually; giving Thanks to God in all Things; not quenching the Gifts of the Spirit, neither in others nor in our ſelves; Trying all Things, and retaining that which is Good; and Laſtly, avoiding all Appearance of Evil. All theſe Duties are abſolutely Neceſſary: Let us therefore praſtiſe them, and let us for that Purpoſe beſeech the God of Peace to Sanctifie our whole Spirit, and Soul and Body, and preſerve them blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

II. *Theſſalonians.*



II. *Thessalonians.*



HIS Epistle was writ a little after the former, about the Year of Christ *Fifty one*. It consists of three Chapters. In the I. St. *Paul* encourages the *Thessalonians* against Persecution. In the II. He undeceives them concerning the Approach of the last Day. And in the III. He exhorts them to live according to the Purity of the Gospel.

C H A P. I.

THESE are the Contents of the first Chapter. I. St. *Paul* gives Thanks to God, that the Faith and Charity of the *Thessalonians* increased more and more, and that they persevered in the midst of the Persecutions they suffer'd. II. He assures them, that God will not fail to punish Persecutors, and those who did not obey the Gospel, and that He would crown the Faithful with everlasting Glory at the
Coming

II. THESSALONIANS. 411

Coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. III. He be-
seeches God to confirm the *Thessalonians*, and to
make 'em increase in Faith and Holiness.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E continue to see in this Epistle,
that the Church of *Thessalonica* did
more and more abound in Faith, Charity, and
the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; that St. *Paul* had
a very particular Kindness for this Church,
and was the Subject of his Joy and Thank-
givings; upon which Account the *Thessalonians*
ought to be a Pattern to all Christians in every
Age. II. This Chapter teaches us, that Chri-
stians, far from being discouraged by those
Afflictions, to which the Profession of the
Gospel exposes them, are thereby better quali-
fied to enter into the Kingdom of God; that
such Afflictions are a Proof of his righteous
Judgment, and that the Lord will come to give
rest and ease to such as have undergone them,
and to exercise Vengeance against Perse-
cutors, and all those who obey not the Gospel
of *Christ*. This Doctrine ought to produce
in us Patience and Joy in our Afflictions, as
well as a lively fear of the Judgment of God,
and constant Endeavours of pleasing Him. III.
The Prayer St. *Paul* makes for the Confirma-
tion of the *Thessalonians*, in Faith and the
Grace of God, shews that we must persevere
in Good, and aim more and more at Perfection.
This is what the Apostle exhorts us all to do
in the following Words: *We pray always for
you, that our God would count you Worthy of this
Calling, and fulfil the good Pleasure of his Goodness,
and the Works of Faith with Power; that the
Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified*

n you, and ye in Him, according to the Grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. II.

I. **S**T. Paul, that he might undeceive the *Thessalonians*, in the Opinion they had entertained, that the Day of the Lord would soon happen, foretels that before the Coming of that Day, there would be an Apostacy in the Church, occasioned by the Man of Sin, and the Son of Perdition; concerning whom he describes the Characters, the Place, the Time, the Manner of his Manifestation, the Progress he would make, and Lastly, his Destruction. II. The Apostle adds Exhortations and Prayers in Favour of the *Thessalonians*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Prophecy contained in this Chapter deserves our greatest Notice. St. Paul here foretels that there would happen an almost general Defection in the Church, which was likewise shewn by the other Apostles; the Accomplishment of this Prophecy appeared in that which happened some Time after the Death of the Apostles; Ignorance, Error, Corruption, Tyranny, Idolatry, and all kinds of Superstitions and Disorders being brought into the Church, and having reigned therein for several Ages; but this Prophecy does likewise shew, that such Tyranny of *Antichrist* and Corruption should not last always, and that the Lord would abolish it, by his infinite Power. This has already happened in Part, and will be one Day wholly compleated. God was pleased that this event, should be foretold, to the End that we should not be surprized

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prized at it, and the Faithful should be upon their Guard. It must likewise be observed, after *St. Paul*, that if there have been some People, and if there be still some, who have suffered themselves to be led away by Error, it is an Effect of the just Judgment of God, because they did not Love the Truth, and because they took Pleasure in Vice; but those whom God has delivered from Error, and whom He has enlightened with the pure Light of the Gospel, ought to give Him Thanks, because he has from the Beginning chosen them to Salvation, and to the Obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; wherefore let us Stand fast in the Doctrine we have received, and let us pray the Lord to sanctifie us entirely, and to establish us in every good Word and Work.

CH A P. III.

I. *ST. Paul* exhorts the *Thessalonians* to pray for him, and for the Progress of the Gospel, and he also Prays for them. II. He orders them to depart from those who lead a wicked Life, and to have no Communication with them; and he blames those particularly that lived in Idleness. III. He concludes his Epistle with Wishes and Prayers for the Faithful of *Thessalonica*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

T H E R E are three chief Reflexions to be made in this Chapter. I. The first is, that the Zeal for the Glory of God obliges all Christians to pray for the Propagation of the Gospel, and for those Faithful Ministers that Preach it, who, on their Part, ought likewise to pray for the Church and all its Members. II.

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The second is, that if there be any People in the Church, who lead a disorderly Life, and do not behave themselves according to the Commands of our Saviour, we ought not to consider them as our Brethren, but avoid their Conversation. This is what *St. Paul* expressly orders in the Name of *Christ*, and what is enjoined in several Places of the New Testament. Whereby it appears, that Pastors are obliged to exercise Discipline, and to excommunicate scandalous Sinners, and that the rest of the Members of the Church ought likewise to shun their Company. III. We learn from hence, that those who, instead of employing themselves, and labouring in lawful Business, spend their Lives in Idleness, in Curiosity, and frivolous Actions, leading a Life wholly unworthy of Christians, do not deserve even to live, since the Apostle has expressly declared, *that if any would not Work, neither should he Eat.*

I. *Timothy.*



I. *Timothy.*



T. Paul writ this Epistle in the Year of our Lord *Fifty two*, to *Timothy*, whom he had left at *Ephesus*, to take care of the Church of that City. His Design was to exhort *Timothy* to withstand the false Teachers; and to instruct him how Bishops and Pastors ought to govern the Church of God.

C H A P. I.

I. **I**N this Chapter, the Apostle orders *Timothy* to hinder certain Jewish Doctors from teaching a Doctrine different from that of the Gospel, and introducing Disputes in the Church. II. And because these Doctors shewed great Zeal for the Law, he informs him what is the true Use thereof. III. This gives him a handle to make mention of the Favour God had done him, in calling him to the

Office of an Apostle, and in general, of the Mercy of God towards Sinners. IV. And *Lastly*, He exhorts *Timothy* to perform the Duties of his Function with Courage.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Instructions contained in this Chapter are the following. I. That the Duty of Ministers is, to teach and preserve the pure Doctrine, and to oppose such as would alter it, by teaching false or vain Doctrines, and that are only proper to raise Disputes and Troubles in the Church. II. That *the end of the Commandment is Charity*, such as proceeds out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned. And that those who turn away from this End, lose themselves in useless Discourses. III. That the Law, which forbids the grossest Crimes, was not properly given to good Men, who have an abhorrence for the same; from whence it follows, that though it be not abolished, there is no longer the same Use for it, in respect to Christians, as formerly, since the Gospel requires a more perfect Holiness from Men, and that they should obey God out of a Principle of Love. IV. St. Paul teaches us here, that *Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners*, which he confirms by his own Example. This is a Doctrine full of Comfort for those Sinners that are truly Penitent. Upon which, what St. Paul says here, does well deserve our notice, namely, That God had shewn him Mercy, because in Persecuting the Church, he had done it through Ignorance and Unbelief. We may learn from hence, that it is more easie to obtain Pardon for those Sins, that are committed through Ignorance, than those that are committed wilfully, and contrary to the Knowledge we have of the

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Will of God. Lastly, We see in this Chapter, that our chiefest Care ought to be, to have a good Conscience, since in losing that, we lose the Faith, and fall into the utmost Obduracy.

C H A P. II.

I. **T**H E Apostle directs that Prayer should be made in the Church for all Men, and particularly for Kings and Magistrates, tho' at that Time they were Heathens; and he builds this Order upon the Will of God, that all Men shall be saved, and that it was for that purpose He sent his Son into the World. II. He says, that Men ought to pray in a Spirit of Peace and Purity; and that Women should assist at the Assemblies of the Church in modest Apparel, and continue in respect and silence.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FR O M this Chapter we learn, I. That it is a very necessary Duty in Religion, to make publick Prayers for the Salvation of all Men, and particularly for Kings, and those that are set in Authority. II. That the Goodness of God towards Men is so great, that He desires that all should be saved, for which end, he has given his Son *Christ Jesus* to be a Mediator between God and Men. III. That no Prayers can be acceptable to God, that do not proceed from a pure Heart, and from a Spirit of Charity and Peace, free from Wrath and Litigiousness. I. Besides this, the Apostle gives Christian Women three Instructions: The *first* is, To be cloathed with Modesty and Bashfulness, as it becomes Women that profess to serve God; to shun Immodesty, and excess of Ornaments; and to practise these

Rules chiefly when they repair to the Religious Assemblies. The *second* is, To remain in Silence and Submission, as well in the Church as at Home, with respect to their Husbands. And the *third*, That they shall be saved, if they take care of the Children they bring into the World, if they educate them in Piety, and if they themselves continue in Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Modesty.

C H A P. III.

ST. *Paul* speaks in this Chapter, I. Of the Importance of the Office of a Bishop, and of a Pastor, and of the Qualities belonging to those that exercise these Employments. II. Of the Office of Deacons, whose business it was to administer the Alms of the Church, and to assist the Bishops in their Functions; and he shews likewise how Deacons ought to be qualified. III. To engage *Timothy* to govern the Church as he ought, he represents to him the Dignity of the Church of God, and the Excellency of the Doctrine that is taught therein.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WH A T St. *Paul* says of the Excellency of the Office of a Bishop, and of the Qualifications that are required in such as aspire to, or exercise the same, shews, that this Office is of divine Institution, and of the highest Importance. This is what Pastors ought, I. Most seriously to consider, to the end, that they may render themselves worthy of so holy a Function, not only by avoiding all those Defects that might render their Ministry unfruitful, and by living in such a Manner, as that no Reproaches can justly be made them; but moreover, by
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an edifying Behaviour, and by giving an Example of all kind of Virtues. This shews likewise, that it is not allowed to admit into the Ministry, Persons that are blameable, and not able to teach and govern the Church of God. All Christians are to consider, in the next Place, that since this Office is of so great Consequence, and since the Salvation of Souls, and the Glory of God, depend on it, we should beseech the Lord that he would always raise up faithful Pastors in the Church, as we are bound to reverence those who bear that Character. II. As for what relates to the Office of Deacons, we find likewise that that is of divine Institution; wherefore 'tis a very great Fault that it should be now abolished in most Christian Churches. III. And *Lastly*, What the Apostle says of the Dignity of the Church, of the Living God, and of the Excellency of the Doctrine of the Gospel which is taught therein, ought to be seriously consider'd, as well by those that govern the Church, as by all the faithful Members thereof, to the end, that both the one and the other may be thereby stirred up to discharge their Duty each of them according to his Condition, and to behave in such manner, as becomes the Excellency of their Calling.

C H A P. IV.

I. **T**H E Apostle warns *Timothy*, that there would rise up false Teachers, who would condemn Marriage, and the Use of certain Meats. II. He exhorts him to teach the pure Doctrine, and to stick to true Piety, of which he represents the Advantage, and the Effects. III. He recommends to him, to render his Ministry and his Youth respectable, and apply himself diligently to all his Duties.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO benefit our selves by this Reading, we must observe, I. That the Prediction St. *Paul* here makes, that there would be People that would forbid Marriage, and the Use of Meats, was accomplished, not only in the primitive Church, but likewise in the following Ages, as we see at this Day. This should make us own how important it is to avoid Error and Superstition, and never to depart from the Doctrine of the Gospel; but it must likewise be remembered, that what St. *Paul* says here, does by no means authorize Libertinism and Sensuality; and that Marriage and the Use of God's Creatures are not allowed but so far as they are used with Moderation and with Thanksgiving. II. We are taught in this Chapter, that Godliness is the most profitable Thing even in this World, because, as St. *Paul* says, *it has the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And that God, who takes Care of all Men, does particularly provide for his Faithful. III. St. *Paul* shews in this Chapter the Duty of the Ministers of the Gospel; it is to Preach pure Doctrine, to exercise Godliness above all things, to behave in such Manner that none may despise them, to be a pattern to the Faithful of Holiness, Purity, and all kind of Virtues, both in their Discourses and in their Actions; to cultivate their Gifts by Labour, by Study, and by a diligent Application to the Functions of their Office, so that all the World may be a Witness of their Progress, and *that they may save themselves, and those who hear them.* And we on our Parts ought to beseech God that He would Sanctifie those who exercise this Office, that they

they may discharge all these Duties to the Glory of God, and to the Edification of his Church.

C H A P. V.

I. **S**T. Paul prescribes to Timothy, how he is to govern himself in Councils and Re-proofs, and in receiving Widows that were maintained at the Expence of the Church, and who served in several Charitable employments; upon which occasion he shews the Duty of Women, and the Faults they are to avoid. II. He speaks next of the Honour and Stipend due to Pastors, and what Rules are to be observed when they were accused, or when any one was to be admitted into that Office.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT is said in this Chapter, is a Lesson to the Rulers of the Church, to dispense their Exhortations with Prudence and Discretion; to administer every thing relating to Religion with Integrity and Precaution; to take care that Alms be rightly Distributed, and to be very Circumspect in the Exercise of Discipline, and at such Times as it is requisite to admit Persons into the holy Ministry. II. The Laws which St. Paul prescribes concerning the Widows who were supported by, and who served the Church, shew that charitable Benevolences and sacred Things ought to be entrusted to Persons of Gravity and Probity, and that those who can assist their poor Relations, ought not to burden the Church with them. We see here particularly, that aged Women ought to apply themselves to Works of Piety and Charity,
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and to give young Women good Instructions, and set them good Examples; that to be Idle, buisy Bodies, Tattlers, and to gad from House to House, is a Life unworthy of Christian Women, whom God requires to be discreet, retired, and to take Care of their House and Family. The order *S. Paul* gives *Timothy*, to reprove Publickly those that Sin, confirms the necessity of Church Discipline and publick Censures. Lastly, we may gather from this whole Chapter, that the Ministry is a very important Office; that it requires a great deal of Prudence and Integrity; that we ought not lightly to accuse nor condemn those who exercise it; that Ministers who acquit themselves worthily of their Office, deserve double Honour; that the Churches ought to love them, and are obliged to provide sufficiently for their Maintenance.

C H A P. VI.

MENTION is made in this Chapter, I. Of the Duties of Servants towards their Masters: II. Of false Doctors, who taught a different Doctrine from that of *St. Paul's*, and of the Mischiefs they caused in the Church, by raising Disputes there; and because these Doctors acted only with a View to their Interest. III. *St. Paul* speaks of Content of Mind, and of the Evils that proceed from the love of Riches. IV. He calls upon *Timothy* with great earnestness, to observe all that he had directed him, to keep purity of Doctrine, and to shun vain Disputes.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HE Care St. Paul takes to describe the Duty of Servants, after having mention'd that of Pastors, shews, that God desires the Salvation of all sort of Persons, and that he has no respect to the Difference of Conditions. This shews likewise, that Servants ought to be Faithful, and in Subjection to their Masters, and to consider, that if in the Time of St. Paul, the Slaves, whose Masters were *Heathens*, were obliged to this Duty, those who serve Christian Masters are under much stricter Obligations.

II. We should seriously reflect upon what is here said about vain Disputes, and the great Mischiefs they produce in the Church; for which reason, both those that teach, as well as those that learn, are bound to avoid them, and to have nothing to do with those that raise them.

III. A third Instruction which St. Paul gives us is, *That the Love of Money is the Root of all evil; but that they that will be Rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition.* Let us never forget this Lesson; let us always remember these excellent and wholesome Instructions, viz. *That Godliness with Contentment is great gain. That we brought nothing into this World, and that it is certain we can carry nothing out. That having Food and Raiment, we ought to be therewith content.* Let us also with St. Paul, exhort those who have worldly Goods, not to be Proud, but to be rich in good Works, that they may have a Treasure for the Time to come, and obtain everlasting Life. Lastly, The grave and solemn Manner, in which St. Paul requires Timothy to fulfil all the Duties of his Office,

Office, and to keep faithfully that which was committed to his care, should engage all those that exercise the holy Ministry, to redouble their Zeal, and to acquit themselves of their Duty with such fidelity, that having fought the good Fight of Faith, they may lay hold on eternal Life. — And be unrebukeable until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his Times He shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be Honour and Power everlasting. Amen.



II. Timo-



II. *Timothy.*



THE Apostle *St. Paul*, writ this Epistle in the Year of Christ *Sixty four*, whilst he was a Prisoner at *Rome*, and a little before he suffer'd Martyrdom. He here exhorts *Timothy* to discharge with faithfulness and fresh Zeal, the Duties of his Office.

CHAP. I.

I. IN this Chapter, *St. Paul* shews the Tenderness he had for *Timothy*, whose Faith and Godliness he commends. II. He exhorts him to double his Zeal, and not to be discouraged by reason of Afflictions, to which the Faithful, and especially the Ministers of the Gospel, were exposed; and always to retain the pure Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*. III. He complains of those that had forsaken him, and prays to God for the Family of *Onesiphorus*, which took care of him in the Time he was in Prison at *Rome*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Praises St. *Paul* gives at the Beginning of this Epistle, of the Piety which *Timothy* had shewn, even from his Youth, and in which he was educated by his Mother and Grandmother, is a Proof of the great Happiness of a Christian Education, and that those Parents who inspire their Children with Holiness, do bestow upon them the greatest of all Goods. But the Exhortations St. *Paul* makes *Timothy*, to kindle more and more the Gift of God which was in him, and to persevere in the Faith, do likewise shew, that those who have been religiously Educated, ought carefully to preserve that heavenly Gift, endeavour to increase it, and make a constant Profession of Piety, without ever being ashamed of it, or without being discouraged by the Oppositions they meet with. All Christians ought to have these Thoughts, but it does in a more particular manner concern the Ministers of the Gospel; and the Example of *Timothy* teaches us, that it is a most precious Advantage to the Church, when God has set over it Pastors that have been endowed with Piety from their Youth, and whose Zeal is alway increasing. The Prayers which the Apostle makes for *Onesiphorus*, who had not forsaken him like others, but had comforted him in his Prison, shew, that it is a Work very acceptable to God, to relieve the Afflicted, and especially such as suffer for the Gospel; and that those who have done it, will receive their Reward, and find Mercy from the Lord at the last Day.

CHAP. II.

I. **T**HIS Chapter contains Exhortations from St. Paul to Timothy, to undergo with Courage the Troubles that attended the Exercise of his Office. II. He recommends to him, to preach the pure Word of God, and to restrain idle and profane Disputes, of which he represents the pernicious Consequences, by comparing them to a Gangreen, which spreads more and more, and by shewing that they were capable of engaging Men in deadly Errors. III. The Apostle adds, that nevertheless there were always some true Believers, that kept themselves free from these Errors, and that the Character by which God owns them is, that they withdrew from Sin. IV. And, Lastly, he orders Timothy to fly from the Desires of Youth, to restrain Disputes, and labour to bring back those that were fallen into Error.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been now read, ought to be carefully meditated by the Ministers of the Gospel. They may here see, that their Office calls them to serve Christ faithfully, and to devote themselves to Him entirely, without engaging in the Business of this Life; to take great Pains to promote the Edification of the Church; to banish Disputes out of it, and to bring back from their Wanderings, those that are engaged in Error or Vice. These Exhortations do likewise concern all of us, since the Character of Christians, which we bear, calls upon us, as much as upon the Ministers themselves, to renounce every thing that may hinder us from being Faithful to Jesus Christ,

Christ, and obliges us to do, and to suffer every thing for the Love of Him, remembering, that if we suffer, we shall also Reign with Him: If we deny Him, He will also deny us. We see moreover in this Chapter, that it is dangerous to hearken to those who raise troubles in the Church, and spread Errors therein; and that therefore every one ought to be upon his Guard, and always adhere to the Doctrine which is taught him in the Word of God. Lastly, all Christians should carefully remember these Words of St. Paul, which contain the Substance of Religion, viz: That the Lord knoweth them that are his; and that the Token by which He owns them is, that they depart from Iniquity; that in the Church there are Vessels of Honour and Vessels of Dishonour, that is to say, there are good and evil Men; and that if a Man purge himself from Sin, he shall be a Vessel unto Honour, Sanctified, and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared unto every good Work.

C H A P. III.

I. **S**T. Paul foretels that great Corruption would creep into the Church, by the Means of false Teachers. II. He exhorts Timothy to shun such People, to withstand them, to imitate his Conduct and Patience under Afflictions, and chiefly to stick to the Doctrine contained in the holy Scriptures, of which he proves the Divinity and Advantage.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Prohpecy which we have read in this Chapter, and which shews that in the latter Days there would be perilous Times, is

is very remarkable. We have seen already, and we continue to see the Accomplishment thereof, a great Number of Christians being involved in all kind of Sins and Disorders, and several having the Form of Godliness, but renouncing the Power thereof. Since this great Corruption was so long ago foretold, we should not be scandalized at it; on the contrary, we ought to be thereby more and more confirmed in the Truth. God has thought fit to warn us thereof, to the End that we do not suffer our selves to be drawn away by evil Examples, but that following the Exhortation of St. Paul, we should resist Sin, and flee from those that are Guilty of it. This is the Duty of all Christians, and particularly of the Ministers of the Gospel. II. This Chapter teaches us, that if whilst we do our Duty, by withstanding Vice and Impiety, we should be exposed to the Contradictions of Sinners, there is nothing more will befall us than what formerly happened to *Moses*, to St. Paul, and most of the Saints, because *all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution*. Lastly, the Apostle teaches us, that the Way to secure our selves and others from Sin and Error is, never to depart from the holy Scripture. What St. Paul says here concerning the Divinity of that sacred Book, and of its usefulness, should engage all Christians, and especially Pastors, to read and meditate it continually, for they will there find all that is necessary to *make them wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Jesus Christ, — And to render them perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*.

C H A P. IV.

I. S T. Paul continues to exhort Timothy with great earnestness to discharge all the Duties of his Office. And, II. That he

may the more effectually engage him thereto, he tells him his Death was drawing near, for which he shews great Joy, and firm Hope of the Glory of Heaven. III. He orders *Timothy* to come and see him as soon as possible, he complains of those that had forsaken him, and concludes this Epistle with Salutations and affectionate Wishes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HOSE whom God calls to the holy Ministry have in this Chapter powerful Motives to discharge all the Parts of their Duty, and especially to preach the Word of God, to reprove, and in all Seasons to exhort, with Zeal, with Evidence, and with Meekness. It is what they are engaged to do by these grave Admonitions which *St. Paul* addresses to *Timothy*, in Summoning him before God, and from the Consideration of the last Judgment, to redouble his Zeal, and Watchfulness. II. The Joy and Confidence which this Apostle shewed at the Time he was about to suffer Martyrdom, is a Proof to us of the great Courage and Constancy wherewith those that have served God faithfully are animated when their Death draws near. And since *St. Paul* declares that the Crown of Righteousness was reserved not only for him, but likewise for all those who love the Appearance of their Lord and Saviour: We ought all of us to imitate this Apostle in the Zeal and Love which he testified for *Christ*: We ought to fight the good Fight, to finish our Course, and to keep the Faith, even to the End. III. The Complaints *St. Paul* makes against those who had abandoned him, shews that there were in the Church at all Times worldly People, who loved the present Life better than *Christ*; as also

so fearful and cowardly Persons, that durst not make an open Profession of Piety, nor stand by those that maintained it. Lastly, *St. Paul* shews us here, by his Example, that though the Faithful are without Support in respect to the World, yet that God never forsakes them in Trials and in Dangers, but that He Strengthens them, and after having delivered them from all Evil, He will save them in his heavenly Kingdom.





TITUS.



T. Paul writ this Epistle to *Titus*, about the Year of Christ *Fifty one*, whom he had left in the Island of *Crete*, now called *Candia*, to take care of the Churches that were there.

CHAP. I.

THIS Chapter has two Parts. I. *St. Paul* orders *Titus* to appoint Pastors in the Churches of the said Island, and describes the Characters with which they ought to be endowed. II. He speaks of certain *Jewish* Doctors that taught Doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and of the evil Disposition of the Inhabitants of the Isle of *Crete*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E S E are the Instructions with which this Chapter affords us. I. *St. Paul* directs *Titus* to establish Ministers in all the Churches of *Crete*. From whence it appears, that the Office of Pastors is of divine Institution, and of absolute Necessity; Moreover, the great Precautions which he advises him to take in the Choice of those Ministers he was to establish, proves, that that sacred Employment ought not to be intrusted but to Persons without reproach, and of an exemplary Life, and who have therewithal the necessary Gifts to teach and preserve the Purity of the Evangelical Doctrine against such as would innovate therein. II. We see besides, that it is the Duty of the Ministers of Christ to set themselves against false Doctors, and such as might seduce Christians, and engage them in Error or in Sin. What the Apostle says to *Titus*, of the Inhabitants of the Isle of *Crete*, who were People addicted to Lying, Wickedness, Sloth, and Sensuality, shews, that 'tis very difficult for such as have an evil Heart and vicious Inclinations to become true Disciples of Christ; but that however, the Servants of God ought to reprove them strongly, and neglect nothing to bring them to the Faith. Lastly, We ought seriously to reflect upon the Description the Apostle here makes of wicked Christians, saying: *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good Work reprobate.* These Words teach us, that the Profession of Religion, and Faith in God, do not avail those that live in Disobedience, nor that renounce God by their Works, and that He will not own them for his.

C H A P. II.

ST. *Paul* does two Things in this Chapter. I. He shews the Duties of old Men, and Women, of young Men and Servants. II. He gives us here an excellent Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine, and shews what is the Design of it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **A** G E D Persons may from hence learn to be sober, grave, pious, and abounding in Charity; christian Women to live likewise in Sobriety, to avoid Slander, to love their Husbands, to take care of their Children, and to keep the House; young People, to be moderate, temperate, and regular in their whole Behaviour; and Servants to be subject to their Masters, and serve them with Fidelity. II. But we ought all of us in general carefully to attend to the Summary of the Christian Doctrine *St. Paul* gives us in this Chapter, in which He says, that the Grace of God that has been manifested by *Jesus Christ*, calls us to renounce, not only Ungodliness, and other Crimes, but likewise worldly Lusts and Desires; and to live in Temperance and Purity with respect to our selves, in Righteousness towards our Neighbour, and in Piety towards God; that it is by living thus, that we may expect with assurance, the last and famous Coming of the great God and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, whose design in giving himself for us was, *to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Let us continually set these divine Instructions before our Eyes, since they contain the

the whole Gospel, and let us regulate by them all our Thoughts, and all our Actions.

CH A P. III.

I. **S**T. Paul directs Christians to submit themselves to the Powers, to slander no Body, and to abound in Meekness and Charity; even towards those who were Enemies of the Christian Religion; and to remember, that it was for this Reason that God out of his great Mercy had saved them themselves at the Time when they likewise lived in all kind of Irregularities. II. He orders Titus in the next Place, to recommend particularly the Practice of good Works, to oppose such as raised Troubles in the Church by foolish Questions, and to shun those who formed Sects and Parties, and broached false and dangerous Doctrines; and he concludes with some Directions which he gives to Titus.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. To be subject to Kings and Magistrates, to avoid Calumny and Disputes, and to behave with a perfect Meekness towards all sort of Persons. II. St. Paul teaches us here, that God has saved us, not by works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy,—through Jesus Christ our Saviour. That being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of everlasting Life. III. The Apostle shews in this Chapter, after the most positive manner, that there is nothing more certain, nor more important, nor what the Ministers of the Gospel ought to inculcate and recommend above all things,

things, than that *they* which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works: These things being good and profitable unto Men. These Words shew, that the Practice of good Works is the most indispensable Duty of Christianity. Finally, We see here, that when there are Persons in the Church, who teach dangerous Doctrines, and who form Sects and Parties therein; wherefore that which is to be done with respect to them is, to admonish them, and if they continue to occasion Troubles, not to own them for Members of the Church, nor to have any communication with them.





PHILEMON.




T. *Paul* writ this Epistle when he was a Prisoner at *Rome* the first Time, about the Year of Christ *Fifty six*, whereof this was the Subject. A Slave, named *Onesimus*, having run away from his Master *Philemon*, and coming to *Rome*, met with St. *Paul*, who converted him to the Christian Religion; after which he sent him back to *Philemon*, with a Letter of Recommendation, in which he intreats him to forgive him, and to receive him as a Brother in *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE see in this Epistle, 1. That *Onesimus* coming to *Rome* after having fled from his Master *Philemon*, St. *Paul* laboured in the Conversion of this Fugitive Slave, and that he had the Comfort to bring him over to the Christian

stian Faith ; thus this Apostle, out of his great Zeal, embraced all Occasions that offered themselves to promote the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men. II. We may observe here, the Charity of St. *Paul*, as well as his Justice and perfect Uprightness, by his recommending *Onesimus* to *Philemon*, by sending him back to him, and by offering to indemnifie *Philemon* for all that *Onesimus* owed him, and for all the Wrong he might have done him. We should learn from this Epistle, to lay hold upon all Occasions to procure the Conversion of Persons that are in Error, and to interest our selves for those who stand in need of our Help, especially for People in whom we discover any Tokens of Piety, or Sinners that return to their Duty. The Request that St. *Paul* made to *Philemon*, that he would pardon *Onesimus*, shews, that we ought always to be ready to pardon those who have offended or injur'd us. We may likewise make this farther Reflexion, that if St. *Paul* offer'd to satisfy *Philemon* for what *Onesimus* owed him, tho' he were not obliged in strictness to do it, those who have done any harm or wrong to others, are much more obliged to make it good. Lastly, The Order which St. *Paul* gives *Philemon*, to receive *Onesimus* no longer as a Slave, but as a Brother, shews, that Christian Masters ought to consider their Servants as their Brethren in *Christ Jesus*, and to treat them with all Mildness and Humanity.

HEBREWS.



HEBREWS.



ST. *Paul*, as it is thought, writ this Epistle in the Year of our Lord *Fifty six*, being Prisoner at *Rome*, and addressed it to the *Hebrews*, that is to say, to the *Jews* that were converted to *Christianity*. His design is, to confirm them in the Profession of the Gospel, and of Holiness, and to prevent them from being drawn away by the Inclination which they might have preserved for the *Jewish* Religion and Worship, or by Persecutions, and the Temptations of Sin; for which purpose he shews, that Christ is the Messiah, that the Gospel is more excellent than the Law, and that the Ceremonies and the Sacrifices of the Law had had their Accomplishment in *Jesus Christ*, and were consequently abolished by his Coming, and his Sacrifice. This is the Subject of the first ten Chapters. In the three last, he exhorts the *Hebrews* to persevere in the Faith, to Patience under Afflictions, and to the most important Duties of Religion.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

ST. *Paul* teaches in this Chapter, I. That God had revealed Himself to Men, by *Jesus Christ*, in the most perfect Manner. II. He proves the excellency of the Gospel by the infinite Worth of *Christ*, shewing that He was exalted to a supream Glory in Heaven, and that He is more excellent than the Angels, and He establishes the Divinity of his Person.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, in which St. *Paul* proves the Excellency of the Gospel, and the Divinity of our Lord, engages us, I. To acknowledge how happy we are to live in the Times of the Gospel, and to praise God, who has sent into the World, to instruct us concerning his Will, and to redeem us, Him who is his own Son, whom He has made to sit on his right Hand in the Heavens, Him by whom the World was made, and whom all the Angels Worship. II. That God having spoken to us by his Son, and having made known to us his Will after a more perfect Manner, than He had done to the *Jews* by the Prophets; our Duty is, to lay hold on the Advantages of the Covenant of Grace, to worship *Jesus Christ* as our Saviour and as our God, to submit our selves to Him, and to obey the Gospel which He has caused to be preached to us, since 'tis the last and the most perfect of all Revelations.

C H A P. II.

I. **S**T. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to continue Steady in the Profession of the Gospel which had been declared to them by *Jesus Christ* and

and the Apostles, and confirmed by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. II. He shews for this Purpose, that all things are put under the Subjection of *Jesus Christ*, and that God has raised him to heavenly Glory after his Sufferings and Death. III. He shews in the last Place, that God was pleased that our Lord should take our Nature and Suffer, to the End, that He might redeem Men from the Power of the Devil and of Death, and to the End, that the Faithful might learn from his Example, not to be afraid of Afflictions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us here, I. That the Gospel having been preached by *Jesus Christ* and the Apostles, and confirmed by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, we have undeniable Proofs of the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine, and that therefore we shall be altogether inexcusable, and shall not escape the Vengeance of God, if we neglect this great Salvation that is offer'd to us, and if we obey not the Gospel. II. The Consideration of the Glory and Power, wherewith Christ was invested after his Humiliation and Death, teach us, that the Sufferings to which the Faithful are exposed, will not hinder them from attaining to Glory; it having been the Will of God, that they shall be led thereto, by the same Way by which *Christ* Himself arrived at it. III. We ought likewise to consider, that the Son of God took upon Him the Nature of Man, and was contented to be made a little lower than the Angels for a while, to the End, that by an Effect of the Goodness of God He might die for all Men, make an Attonement for their Sins, and destroy the Empire of the Devil, and of Death. This is a Doctrine which should fill us with Joy and a
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firm Reliance upon God through Christ, and which likewise very strongly engages us to live as his redeemed, and to flee from Sin, lest we should fall again under the Power of the Devil and of Death, from which our Lord has deliver'd us.

C H A P. III.

TH E Apostle does two Things in this Chapter. He shews, I. That *Christ* was far above *Moses*, since *Moses* was only a Servant in the House of God, whereas *Christ*, as a Son, is the Lord and Master thereof. II. He exhorts the *Hebrews* to obey the Gospel, and not to imitate the *Israelites*, who were excluded from the Land of *Canaan*, and who died in the Wilderness, because of their Rebellion and Unbelief.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WH A T St. *Paul* says in this Chapter; I. Of the Excellency of the Person and Ministry of *Christ* above that of *Moses*, should make us sensible of the Obligation which Christians lie under of adhering to *Christ*, by a sincere Obedience and true Faith, as it proves the greatness of the Crime, of which those who disobey Him are Guilty. II. We see next, that the ancient *Israelites*, for having been Rebellious and Unbelieving, when *Moses* caused them to hear the Voice of God, died in the Wilderness; and God swore that they should not enter into **the** Land of *Canaan*. 'Tis thus God resolves to exclude from Heaven those whose Heart wanders from the right Way, and who provoke Him by their Rebellion and Obdurateness. *Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, to Day if we will hear his Voice, let us not harden our Hearts; let us take heed*

heed least there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God : But let us exhort one another daily, whilst this Time and Day of Grace lasts, least any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin.

C H A P. IV.

I. **S**T. Paul continues to shew, that as the disobedient *Israelites* did not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, so neither shall the unbelieving Christians enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. For this Purpose he observes, that what is said in the Old-Testament of the Rest of God, relates to the Times of the Gospel, and to that true Rest which consists in the Salvation that *Christ* has obtained for us. II. He concludes from thence, that we ought to labour to enter into this Rest. He declares, that Unbelievers shall not escape those Threatenings which the Word of God has denounced against them ; and to encourage the *Hebrews* to persevere in the Christian Profession, and be Constant under Afflictions, He represents that *Jesus Christ* is a merciful High-Priest, who Himself having suffered, is inclined to have Compassion upon our Infirmities, and to assist us in all our Wants.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from this Chapter, I. That those who despise and neglect the Promises of God, shall be deprived of them ; and that the Word of God is of no Use, when it is not attended with Faith in those that hear it ; wherefore we ought to be careful, after what manner we receive this Word and these Promises. II. St. Paul teaches us, that there is an everlasting Rest which *Christ* has acquired for us, and

and which is much more excellent than that that was promised to the *Israelites*; but as the rebellious *Israelites* did not enter into the Rest of the Land of *Canaan*, so those who do not obey *Christ Jesus*, will be deprived of that Rest which is promised us in the Gospel. Let us therefore endeavour to enter into that Rest, lest we should fall into the like Rebellion. For which Purpose let us consider, III. That as all that the Word of God says, is true, the Threatnings of the Gospel are also no less certain, that they will be infallibly executed, and that we shall not be able to escape from Him, with whom we have to do, since all things are naked and open in his Sight. Lastly, since we have in Heaven *Jesus* our supream High-Priest, who Himself was tempted in all things, Sin only accepted, let us hold fast the Profession we make of Believing in him; and let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in the Time of need.

C H A P. V.

ST. Paul treating of the Priesthood of *Jesus Christ* shews, I. That he was called by God to the Office of a Priest, which he proves by two Prophecies, taken out of the Book of *Psalms*, and particularly by observing that he was to be like *Melchisedec*, who had been King and Priest together. II. He says next, that *Christ* performed the Functions of a Priest, when He suffered Death for the Salvation of Men. III. And Lastly, being about to speak of the Priesthood of our Lord, and of the resemblance there was between Him and *Melchizedec*, he reproaches the *Hebrews* with the small Progress they had made in the Knowledge of Religion, and which hindered them from understanding what he was going to say to them.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HIS Chapter teaches us, that *Christ* was appointed by God to be our High-Priest, and that under this Character He offer'd up Himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind. This engages us to look upon *Jesus Christ* as the Author of our Salvation, and as Him who has render'd God propitious and favourable to us ; but this very Doctrine should likewise convince us of our obligation to submit ourselves to the Gospel, by a sincere Obedience : Since, as *St. Paul* says, *Christ* did not become the Author of eternal Salvation, but unto all them that obey Him.

II. A second Reflexion that is to be made upon what *St. Paul* says in this Chapter is, that our Lord, in the Days of his Flesh, offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from Death, and was heard, in that He feared, having learnt Obedience by the Things which He suffered. The Children of God may discover from hence, that when they are under great Sufferings, they are like their Saviour ; that God sends them Afflictions, to teach them Patience and Obedience, and call upon Him with greater Zeal ; but at the same Time they may likewise be assured, that God will hear them when they offer up their Prayers to Him in their Necessities. III. The last Verses of this Chapter, in which the Apostle reproaches the *Hebrews* of being so little advanced in the Knowledge of Religion, and of still wanting to be taught the Rudiments thereof, oblige us to consider, that it would be a much greater shame if we should deserve the like Reproaches, considering the Time that is employed in instructing us ; wherefore we ought to exert our-

selves in acquiring new Lights, and in daily making greater Progress in the Knowledge of Religion.

C H A P. VI.

I. **S**T. *Paul* tells the *Hebrews*, that it was not his Intention to teach them the first Rudiments of Religion, but that he designed to propose to them more sublime Doctrines, by discoursing of the Similitude which there was between Christ and *Melchisedec*, and the ancient Priests. II. To excite them to proceed in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Gospel, he sets before their Eyes, the Unhappiness of those, who neglecting to be confirmed in the Faith, and despising the Lights and Graces they had received from God, do forsake *Jesus Christ*, and do no longer produce the Fruits which God expects from them. III. He tells the *Hebrews*, that the Reason why he spake to them in this manner was, to awaken their Zeal, since he was convinced that they would not expose themselves to the like Misfortune. IV. And, *Lastly*, to strengthen their Faith, he represents to them the Steadiness of God's Promises, and the Certainty of that Hope which Christ's Entrance into Heaven gives all Believers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**E ought to take great Notice of the first Verses of this Chapter, since St. *Paul* shews us thereby, what are the fundamental Articles of Religion, viz. The Doctrine of Faith in God ; of Repentance ; of Baptism, and the Imposition of Hands, which in those Times was joined to Baptism ; of the Resurrection of the Dead ; and of the last Judgment.

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Wherefore these are the Doctrines to which we should chiefly adhere. II. The Apostle teaches us, that 'tis not enough to know these Doctrines, but that Christians ought to aim at greater Perfection, and to join to the Knowledge of these essential Truths, that of other Truths, which, tho' they be less important, serve to enlighten Religion, and to confirm the Faith. III. He declares to us in this Chapter, that those who, after having been enlighten'd, and after having tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, should fall away, it would be impossible, at least extremely difficult, for them to be renewed again unto Repentance, if they persevere in such a Condition. This should make us extremely afraid to sin against Light, to abuse the Word of God, and to resist his Grace, lest we should become like the *Earth, which drinking in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, bears nothing but Thorns and Briars, and is therefore rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, and its end to be burned.* IV. And Lastly, those who believe the Gospel, and manifest the Sincerity of their Faith by their Patience and Charity, may for their comfort and encouragement consider what the Apostle says here, that *God is not unrighteous, to forget their Work and labour of love*; that the Promises of God are unchangeable, having been made with an Oath, and confirmed by the Entrance of Christ into Heaven; and therefore, that the Hope of the Faithful is as a strong and sure Anchor of the Soul, which supports them, and which penetrates even into Heaven, where Christ is entered as our forerunner.

C H A P. VII.

TH E S E are the Contents and Purport of this Chapter. *St. Paul* has a Mind to shew the Excellency of the Priesthood of *Jesus Christ*, by proving Him a Priest according to the Order of *Melchisedec*. For which end he observes, I. That *Melchisedec* was a Priest after a different Manner from the *Jewish* Priests: This appears, because he was a King, because the Scripture does not relate his Genealogy, and because it is said that he had neither Predecessors, nor Successors after his Death, and that therefore he was alone in his Kind; and lastly, because he was superiour to *Abraham*, that Patriarch having paid him Tythes of the Spoil. II. *St. Paul* observes farther, that neither *Melchisedec* nor *Christ* were of the Family of *Aaron*, out of which the *Jewish* Priests were chosen, and that God had promised with an Oath, that the Priesthood according to *Melchisedec* was to be everlasting. From all these Considerations, *St. Paul* would infer, that God having promised that the Messiah should be a Priest as *Melchisedec*, his Priesthood was of a quite different Nature from that of the *Jewish* Priests; that he was to be both King and Priest together, and the only Priest also; that his Priesthood was to be one alone, and most perfect, and that consequently, the Levitical Priesthood was to be abolished. III. The Apostle shews, about the end of the Chapter, that *Christ* infinitely excelled the *Jewish* Priests by his perfect Holiness.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E principal Observation that we are to make upon this whole Chapter is, to acknowledge and admire the infinite Wisdom of God, who had so clearly signified in the ancient Prophecies what the Messiah was to be, as *St. Paul* shews, by proving with so much Evidence and Strength out of the Law it self, and from the old Testament, that the Levitical Worship and Priesthood were to be abolished by the Sacrifice and Oblation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. This ought powerfully to convince us of the Truth of the Gospel, and stir us up to search and meditate the Scriptures and Oracles of the Prophets, in which we find such noble Proofs of the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine. And since the Design of this whole Chapter tends to instruct us in the Perfection and Efficacy of the Sacrifice of Christ, we cannot doubt but that we shall find in Him all that is necessary to obtain the Pardon of our Sins, and to purifie our Souls; and that having for our Priest and our King him who is perfectly holy, and exalted above the Heavens, he will be able to save all those that come to God by Him.

C H A P. VIII.

TH E Apostle does two Things. I. He continues to shew, that Christ was superiour to the *Jewish* Priests upon the following account: That having been exalted to Heaven, He is the Minister and High Priest of the Heavenly Sanctuary, whereas the ancient Priests were no more than Ministers of the earthly Sanctuary. II. He shews in the same View, that God had foretold by the Prophet *Jeremiah*,

that the Covenant which he formerly made with the *Israelites* should be abolished, and that He would enter into a more excellent one with Mankind, in which He would pardon their Sins, and sanctifie them by his Spirit.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter engages us to make the three following Reflexions. I. That we have a high Priest set down in the Heavens upon the right Hand of the Divine Majesty. This Entrance of Christ into Heaven, should fully convince us of the Perfection and Efficacy of this Sacrifice, and should likewise assure us, that He has procured us a Right to the Heavenly Glory, and that He will one Day bring us thither. II. The *second* Reflexion relates to the Happiness we have of being admitted into the new Covenant which God had promised to make with Men at the Coming of the Messiah, for which we ought to return Him our most sincere Thanks. III. In the *third* Place, we ought to consider, that the End which God proposed to himself by this Covenant was, to put his Laws in our Heart, to fill us all with his Knowledge and his Fear, and to forgive us our Sins. Let us on our side make him suitable Returns, let us faithfully discharge those Duties which our Covenant with Him requires of us; let us beware of being like the *Jews*, who did not keep the Covenant of the Lord, and who, for that Reason, were rejected by Him; let us beseech Him, for that purpose, that He himself, according to his Promises, would vouchsafe to engrave his holy Laws upon our Hearts, and upon our Minds, and increase in us his Knowledge more and more, so that we may always be his true People, and He may be always our God.

CHAP,

C H A P. IX.

I. **S**T. *Paul* gives us a Description of the ancient Tabernacle, and of the Service performed therein; and he observes particularly, that the High-Priest enter'd but once a Year only into the most holy Place, which was to shew, that the Way to Heaven was not yet opened for all Men. II. He informs us next, that all these Things were Types and Figures of what was to happen one Day, and especially, that the Entrance of the High Priest into the most holy Place signified, that Christ would enter into Heaven by his own Blood, and that by this means He would obtain for us an eternal Redemption, his Blood having an efficacy which that of the legal Victims wanted. III. The Apostle adds, that as the ancient Covenant was confirmed by the Blood of Beasts, so likewise was the new by the Blood of Christ. IV. He concludes from all this, that the Sacrifice of Christ is perfect, and of an infinite Value; that it will not be repeated; and that Christ being once Dead, there is nothing more to be expected, but that He should come at the last Day to introduce the Faithful into Glory.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Comparison St. *Paul* makes, between the Priests of the Law, and *Jesus Christ*, tends chiefly to instruct us of the Power and Virtue of his Death, and of his Sacrifice. We see here, that the Blood of Christ has a Quality, with which the Legal Sacrifices were not endowed, forasmuch as it opens to us the Way to Heaven, our Lord being enter'd into it for us, as well as for Himself, which exalts us to

the most glorious Hopes; but *St. Paul* teaches us likewise, that this Blood must sanctifie and purge our Conscience from dead Works, to serve the Living God. By which we see, that the Sacrifice of Christ lays us under a Necessity of Labouring for our Sanctification, if we desire to reap any Advantage from it. To the same end, we must meditate upon what is said in this Chapter, that the Covenant of the Gospel was confirmed by the Blood and Death of the Son of God; from which period, that Covenant is firm and unchangeable in all that it contains; the Duties it prescribes are altogether inviolable and sacred, and its Threats, as well as its Promises, will be infallibly executed. Lastly, If the Sacrifice of Christ was made once for all, and can never be repeated; and if there remains nothing more, but that He should return at the last Day to save those that wait for Him, and who live in Godliness; it follows from thence, that there is but one only Means, and one only Term to obtain Salvation. The only Means is, to lay hold on the Grace which is offered us in *Christ Jesus*; and the only Term is, the Time of this Life; since it is appointed unto Men once to die, and after that the Judgment.

C H A P. X. 1,——18.

ST. *Paul* shews, that the Sacrifices of the Law had not the Power of attoning for the Sins of Men, nor of sanctifying them; and that nothing but the Sacrifice of *Jesus Christ*, and the Oblation He has once made of his Body by the Will of God, is capable to justifie and sanctifie us perfectly and for ever.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read, instructs us in the Perfection of the Sacrifice of Christ, and of its effects. *St. Paul* teaches us, that our Sins were expiated by the Oblation Christ made of his Body upon the Cross; and that after having offer'd Himself as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind, he is set down for ever on the right Hand of God. Besides this, the Apostle makes us consider the Sacrifice of our Lord as an effect of his Submission to the Will of his Father, and of his Love towards us. These are Considerations that should inspire us with an ardent Love for this charitable Saviour, and engage us likewise to submit in all Things to the Will of God. And since this Will, and the Oblation that Christ has made of himself, have no other Views but our Salvation; since the Work of our Redemption is fully accomplished, and since God has received us into his Covenant, 'tis our Business to lay hold upon these precious Advantages which our Lord has attained for us by his Death and Ascension into Heaven, and to discharge with Faithfulness all the Duties of this Covenant of Grace, under which we have the Happiness to live; least by our Ingratitude and Disobedience we deprive our selves of the Fruits of the Death of Christ.

C H A P. X. 19,—39.

ST. *Paul* having shewn the Efficacy of the Sacrifice of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, does three Things. I. He exhorts the *Hebrews* to draw near to God with Confidence, and to persevere in the Profession of the Christian Religion, and in

in the Practice of good Works. II. He threatens with the most terrible Punishments those, who after having received the Knowledge of the Gospel, fall into Disobedience and Apostacy. III. To the End that Christians should not turn away from the Profession of the Truth, by reason of Persecution, he exhorts them to suffer with the same Constancy as they had done till then.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E S E Words furnish us with three Instructions. I. That since *Christ* has obtained for us, by his Death and Ascension, the Liberty of entering into Heaven, we ought to draw near to God with a full Reliance, and at the same Time with a Heart purified and cleansed from the Defilements of Sin, and to excite one another continually to Piety, Charity, and all kind of good Works. II. That although the Gospel be a Covenant of Grace, yet it threatens with the most dreadful Punishments those that shall break it; that the Punishments which the Gospel denounces against those that shall despise the Blood of the Son of God, and offer Violence to his Holy Spirit, are infinitely more terrible, than what was inflicted upon those who violated the Law of *Moses*; that there remains no more Sacrifices for Rebellious and Apostate Christians, that they have nothing to expect but a tremendous Judgment, and that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God. III. This Portion of Scripture teaches us, that Christians ought never to faint under Persecutions; that they ought even to suffer with Joy, the Loss of their Goods, and the most grievous Afflictions, since they will afterwards meet with a great Recompense from God; and that when they have done his Will, they shall infallibly receive the Effect of his Promises.

CHAP. XI. 1,—22.

TH E Apostle, to confirm the Faith of the *Hebrews*, proposes to them in this Chapter, the Example of the *Patriarchs*, and of the ancient Believers, who, by their Faith and Reliance upon the Promises of God, had been acceptable to him, and had overcome the severest Trials. 'Tis upon this Account, that St. Paul alledges the Example of *Abel*, of *Enoch*, of *Noah*, of *Abraham*, and of *Sarah*; to which he adds, those of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, and of *Joseph*, who, by the Blessings which they gave their Children, and by what they said before their Death, shewed that they were convinced, that the Promises of God should be fulfill'd.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H I S Chapter instructs us in the Nature of Faith and its Effects. St. Paul teaches us here, that Faith is a strong and lively Perswasion of the Things that God has revealed to us; that it causes us to consider them as present, though we don't yet see them; that it consists in believing that there is a God, and that this God is the Rewarder of those that serve Him; and lastly, that we cannot be acceptable to Him without Faith. II. The Apostle teaches us, that true Faith does always produce these three Effects: Trust in the Promises of God, Obedience to his Commandments, and Constancy in Afflictions. This is confirmed by the Examples of *Abel*, of *Enoch*, of *Noah*, and other *Patriarchs*; but it appears most illustriously in the Example of the Patriarch *Abraham*, who gave such noble Proofs of his Reliance upon God's Promises, and of his prompt Obedience.

dience, by forsaking his native Country, and by consenting to Sacrifice his Son *Isaac*. Thus we see in this Chapter, that from the beginning of the World, and in all Ages, there have been pious and holy Persons, who have shewn the Sincerity of their Faith, by obeying God in the most difficult Matters, and by trusting to his Promises. We do likewise learn here, that those ancient Believers underwent very great Trials, living in the World like Strangers and Travellers; that they waited for a better Life, and looked for their Country in Heaven. These Examples ought to make a strong Impression upon our Minds. 'Tis thus we ought to shew the Sincerity of our Faith, by depending on the Promises which God makes us in the Gospel, by obeying and serving Him faithfully, by living like Strangers upon the Earth, and panting after our true Country which is in Heaven.

C H A P. XI. 23,—40.

ST. *Paul* continues to propose to the *Hebrews*, several Examples of the Faith, Piety, and Constancy of the Ancients. He speaks of *Moses*, of the Deliverance from *Egypt*, of the Reduction of the Land of *Canaan*, of the Judges, of the Prophet *Samuel*, of King *David*, and of divers Prophets and Martyrs, who by their Faith had done great Miracles, and had undergone with Constancy all kind of Torments, and even Death it self.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us seriously consider these noble Instances of Faith, Patience, and Godliness, which are here set before our Eyes. Let us yield a particular Attention to the Behaviour
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of *Moses*, who chose rather to suffer with the People of God, than to enjoy the Advantages that were offer'd him in *Egypt*: This may teach us to renounce worldly Goods and Pleasures, when they hinder us from doing our Duty; and let us prefer the Cross of *Christ* to all the Delights of this Life, and of Sin: II. Let us, in the next place; reflect upon the many Miracles which those who delivered the People of God wrought by their Faith, and upon the great Things which God has done at divers Times, by their Means, and for their sakes. III. Thereby we may see, that Faith is of a great Efficacy, and that if we trust in God, pursuant to his Word and Promises, nothing can hinder us from attaining to Salvation. But above all, we should carefully observe the Account *St. Paul* gives us in this Chapter, of what the Prophets and ancient Martyrs suffered, of those Persecutions to which they were exposed, and of the Constancy they shewed, under the cruel Punishments by which they ended their Lives. Let us remember for that Purpose, that God has favour'd us with Advantages, which those who lived before the Coming of *Christ* did not enjoy, and that He has reserved something better for us; that therefore we are under much stricter Obligations to walk in the Footsteps of those Holy and Illustrious Servants of God, to the End that by imitating their Faith, we may like them arrive at Perfection and Salvation.

CHAP. XII. 1,—13.

I. *St. Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews*, to imitate the Example of the Faithful of the Old-Testament, which he had set before their Eyes in the preceeding Chapter, and especially that
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of *Christ*, and to suffer Afflictions with Patience. II. He instructs them in the Design for which God afflicts his Children, and of the Advantage that results from thence, and he encourages them by these Considerations to strengthen themselves, and to persevere in the Profession of the Gospel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That the Example of the Saints and true Believers, who formerly render'd themselves acceptable to God by their Faith, Patience, and Obedience, ought Powerfully to incite us to do our Duty also; and this Example should make so much the greater Impression upon us, as God has endowed us with greater Lights and more Grace than the ancient Believers, and above all, as we have before our Eyes the Example of *Christ*, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. II. The Apostle instructs us here, concerning the Nature of Afflictions, by telling us that we ought not to lose Courage when the Lord reproves us; that God chastens whom He loves, that He does it for our Good, and to render us partakers of his Holiness, and that Afflictions produce most wholesome Effects. This Doctrine engages us to the two following Duties. The one is, neither to faint nor to murmur in Affliction, but to suffer it patiently, and even with Joy, of what kind soever it be; since it is God our Father that sends, and since He only does it for our Good. The other Duty is, to answer the Ends which God proposes to Himself by Afflicting us, to make a right Use of the Evils we undergo, and to place them to the Account of our Correction and Advancement in Holiness.

C H A P. XII. 14,——29.

I. **S**T. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to Holiness and Perseverance in Faith, and advises them to shun every thing that might cause them to fall away from the Grace of God. II. He compares the Law with the Gospel, and the Manner in which the Law was published, with the Manner of Promulgating the Gospel; whereby he proposes to shew, that those who disobey *Jesus Christ*, are threaten'd with the severest Judgments of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us improve the Counsels and Warnings which St. *Paul* gave the *Hebrews* in the Words we have just now read. They teach us, I. That we are indispensably obliged to live in Holiness, and that without it, it will be impossible for us ever to see the Face of God. II. That we ought to labour with great Diligence to preserve our selves in the Favour of God, and to take care that there be in us no seed of Unbelief and Rebellion that may cause us to lose it. The Example of *Esau* is a Lesson to us to avoid Sensuality, and not to prefer the vain and frivolous Advantages of the World, before the everlasting Goods which God offers us, lest we be deprived of the Blessing of our heavenly Father. The Comparison which the Apostle here makes between the Law and the Gospel, obliges us to make these two Reflexions: The *first* is, that we live under a Covenant much more Excellent than that of the *Jews*, since we are Members of the Christian Church, since the Gospel has been preached to us by the Son of God himself, and confirmed by his own Blood; and since God
calls

calls us to the Possession of an infinite Glory with all the Saints. These Considerations do strictly oblige us to keep this Covenant, and fulfil all the Duties thereof. The *second* Reflexion is, that tho' the Gospel was not published with so terrible a Pomp as the Law was formerly upon Mount *Sinai*, and tho' we live under a Dispensation of Grace and Mercy, those who shall despise the Voice of Christ, must expect much more severe Punishments than what were denounced against the *Jews*. 'Tis what St. *Paul* remarks, by saying: That we shall not escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven: — Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved: — Let us serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, for our God is a consuming Fire.

C H A P. XIII.

IN this last Chapter, the Apostle, I. Exhorts Christians to Charity, Chastity, content of Mind, and trust in God. II. He recommends to them to remember their Guides, and not to be drawn away from the pure Doctrine he had taught them, nor be brought under subjection to the legal Ceremonies, nor to fear Persecution. III. He prescribes to them the Duties of Praise, of Benificence, and submission to their Pastors. IV. And *Lastly*, He recommends himself to their Prayers, and prays for their Sanctification.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Duties prescribed in this Chapter are the following. I. To love one another as Brethren; to exercise Charity and Hospitality, and to take care of those that suffer Per-

Persecution for the Gospel. II. To live in Chastity, whether in a single or married State; to have an abhorrence for all kind of Uncleanneſs, remembering that God will one Day judge the Impure. III. To flee Covetouſneſs, to be content with our Condition, and always to rely upon the Providence of God. IV. To remember that the Character of Chriſtians, and Faith in Chriſt crucified, call us to take up our Croſs, and to live in this World, as thoſe who *have no continuing City here, but ſeek one to come.* V. Never to neglect the Duty of Praise and Thankſgivings, no more than that of Bountifulneſs and Alms, both of them being moſt pleaſing Sacrifices to God. VI. And *Laſtly*, To obey our Paſtors, and to be ſubject to them, as thoſe who watch for our Souls, and to pray continually for them. Let us ſeriously meditate upon all theſe Leſſons, and put them in Practice, and let us pray *the God of Peace, to make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*



St. *J*AMES.



THIS Epistle, and the following, are called Catholick, that is to say, Universal or General, because they were writ to Christians in general, and not to some particular Persons or Churches. This of *St. James* is directed to the *Jews* of the Twelve Tribes, who were dispersed in divers Countrys, but had embraced the Christian Religion. The Design of it is, to strengthen them against Persecutions, and chiefly against certain false Teachers, and certain Hypocrites, who professing themselves Christians, and boasting that they knew more than others, lived in Sin and Licentiousness.

C H A P. I.

I. **T**HE Apostle here exhorts the Believers to rejoyce in Afflictions, and to seek by Prayer for that Assistance which they stood in need of, to undergo them. II. He comforts those

those Christians who were in Adversity, and despised by the World, and he exhorts the Rich to be humble. III. He speaks against those who maintained that God inclined Men to Sin; and against those false Teachers, and proud and hypocritical Persons, who condemned others, and contented themselves to hear the Word of God, without observing what it directed them; he shews, that the Religion of such Persons is vain, and he teaches, that true Religion consists in the Practice of Deeds of Charity, and in the Renunciation of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains several Instructions, which ought to be most seriously weighed and considered. I. The *first* is, that Afflictions, and particularly those which we suffer for the Gospel, ought to be an Occasion of Joy to all Christians, since they serve to try them, to render them perfect, and to make them obtain the Crown of Life, which God has promised to those that love Him. II. That God never refuses his Grace and spiritual Gifts to such as ask them of Him with Faith. III. That those true Believers, who are but in a mean Station in this World, may boast of themselves in the Lord; and on the contrary, that rich and great Persons, ought to entertain Sentiments of Humility. IV. The Apostle declares, in the most positive manner, that God is by no means the Author of Sin, but that Sin does only proceed from our selves; and that God is so far from being the Cause of Sin, that He is the Author of all Good, since He has regenerated us by his Word, to the end that we may become new Creatures. V. St. James teaches us, that

it is not sufficient to hear the Word of God, but that our great and principal Business is, to practise what it commands. VI. And *Lastly*, We may learn from hence, that those who think themselves holy, and better than other Men, and yet do not govern their Tongue, are falsely Religious, and that solid Piety and true Religion do chiefly consist in exercising Charity towards the Unhappy, and in preserving our selves pure, so as not to be defiled by worldly Corruptions. These are most wholesome Precepts : God grant us Grace to make a right Use of them.

CH A P. II.

THIS Chapter consists of two Parts. I. St. *James* reproves those who had regard to rich Men, and despised the Poor in the Assemblies of the Church. He shews, that Faith in *Jesus Christ* did not allow these Kinds of Distinctions, since God has chosen the Poor, as well as the Rich, to give them the Kingdom of Heaven ; and that the Law and the Gospel, by which we are to be judged, is the Law of Charity and Liberty. II. In the second Part, St. *James* confutes those who maintained, that we can be justified by Faith in Christ without good Works ; and he shews, by the very Nature of Faith, and by the Examples of *Abraham* and *Rahab*, that the Faith which is not attended with good Works is vain, and consequently, can neither justify, nor procure us Salvation.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the first Part of this Chapter we are taught, I. That we ought not to have too little Consideration for the Poor, nor too much for the Rich, since Faith and Piety may be met with in the Poor and Lowly, as well as in the Rich and Great; and since God has likewise chosen the Poor, who are rich in Faith, to make them Heirs in his Kingdom. II. That in the Assemblies of the Church, Christians ought to shew, that they look upon one another as Brethren, and as Equals. III. That the Rich ought not to entertain Sentiments of Pride, nor despise or oppress the Poor. IV. That the Law of Christ, is a Law of Charity, of Humility, and true Liberty, and that God will judge us by that Law. V. That he who breaks the Law of God in one only Point, is no less Guilty in his Sight, than if he had broken all the Commandments; which teaches us, that the abandoning our selves to one only Sin, and the continuing in one only evil Custom, is sufficient to exclude us from Salvation. In the next Place, it is very important to observe, what St. James teaches concerning Justification, in the second Part of this Chapter, and with what Strength he disproves the impious Doctrine of those false Christians, who held, that we may be justified by Faith, without good Works. The Apostle shews, that true Faith is necessarily attended with good Works, and that the Faith which does not produce Works is vain and dead; and this is what he confirms by the Example of *Abraham*, who manifested the Sincerity of his Faith by his Obedience to God, in offering his Son *Isaac*; as also by the Example of *Rahab*. From hence we may gather, that those who

neglect good Works, and do not prove their Faith by a holy Life, and by Obedience to God's Commands, can by no means be justified, nor partake of Salvation.

C H A P. III.

I. **S**T. *James* forbids Christians to set up themselves for Teachers, and Masters above others, or to condemn or speak evil of other Persons; and he represents what Mischiefs and Disorders the Tongue may produce. II. He says next, that Meekness, Forbearance, and love of Peace, are the Tokens by which true Christians are to be distinguished. We must observe, that what St. *James* says here, relates to certain Persons, who thought themselves more knowing and more perfect than others, who condemned with great Pride and Severity those that were not of their Opinion, and who thereby troubled the Peace of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**HIS Chapter treats first of the Sins into which the Tongue may cause us to fall, which therefore we ought most seriously to observe. St. *James* teaches us here, that the Tongue may be the Occasion of numberless Evils, and oftentimes of incurable ones too; that we may sin by Discourse and Speeches, in infinite Ways against God, and against our Neighbour; that the Edification of the Church may be thereby destroyed, and that the Fire of Division and Discord may be thereby kindled. This obliges us to regulate our Words by the Fear of God, and by Wisdom, to speak little, to avoid above all Slander and Calumny, and to abstain from all Discourses contrary to Charity

rity and Humility. This Duty is of great Importance, and St. *James* teaches us, that one of the surest Tokens of true Piety is, to know how to govern ones Tongues and Language. II. The Apostle in this Chapter gives us another Mark, whereby to know Persons, who are endowed with solid Piety and true Wisdom; namely, Meekness and great Moderation in their Discourse, and all their Behaviour. He declares with great earnestness, that those who think themselves more knowing than others, but are Indiscreet and Insolent in their Words, or Passionate, and full of Envy and Pride, and that condemn others, and occasion Divisions, are only Hypocrites; he says, that wherever Malice and Slander prevailed, there was all kind of Evil; Lastly, he teaches us that true Piety, which proceeds from Heaven, is Pure, Peaceable, Moderate, full of Mercy and good Fruits, sincere, and without Hypocrisy. Let us study to acquire this true Wisdom, to put on this Spirit of Meekness, Moderation, Sincerity and Peace, and we shall experience both in this World and the other what St. *James* says in the last Words of this Chapter: *That the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace.*

C H A P. IV.

ST. *James*, after having mention'd the Evils which the Tongue and the Spirit of Strife and Dissention do produce, shews in this Chapter, I. That all these Disorders proceed from carnal Passions, and particularly from the Love of Pleasures, from Pride, from a desire of Pre-eminence above others, and from a Spirit of Envy and Jealousy. II. Because of which, he exhorts those in whom these Passions reign, to Humility and Repentance, and he particularly

forbids Slandering and rash Judgments. III. And lastly, he condemns those who form Projects and Designs, without Reflecting upon the Vanity of Life, and without considering that they depend upon the Providence of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn here, I. That the Love of Pleasure, Pride and Envy, are the principal Causes of those Evils which Men do to one another, and of the Divisions that prevail in the Church. Wherefore we ought to avoid those Passions, and particularly the Love of the World, which is the spring thereof, as also Pride, remembering that it is not in vain that the Scripture says, that *whosoever will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God*; And that *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace unto the Humble*. II. We see in this Chapter, that in order to draw near to God when we have departed from Him, we must be sensible of our Misery, bewail our Faults, resist Temptations, renounce the Diversions of the World, and purifie our Heart and all our Actions, upon which Conditions, God will draw near to us. III. The Apostle teaches us, that Calumny is a great Sin, since he who speaks Evil of his Brother, Judges and Condemns him, which belongs to none but God. IV. Let us remember in all our Designs, and particularly in those of which the End is Interest and Advantage, that our Life is Short and Uncertain, that it vanishes away like Smoak; that it is therefore a great Folly to form remote Projects, counting upon the Duration of our own Life, and upon our own Industry, and that we ought to depend upon the Providence of God in all things. V. St. James teaches us farther, that it is not sufficient for us to know our Duty,

ty, but that we ought to make a right Use of our Knowledge, which unless we do, we shall only become more guilty before God. It is the important Advice contained in these Words: *Therefore to him that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin.*

C H A P. V.

I. **T**H E Apostle having spoken, in the foregoing Chapter, of those who labour to heap up Riches, without considering that they depend upon Providence, denounces the Judgments of God against Rich and Covetous Men, against those that live in Voluptuousness, and against such as oppress the Poor. II. He afterwards applies himself to Christians that are in Sufferings; he exhorts them to wait with Patience for the Coming of the Lord, not to complain too bitterly against those that did them Evil, and to avoid Swearing, and every thing that denoted Impatience. III. He shews lastly, the Duty of those that are in Affliction, and particularly that of Sick People. He says, that the Sick should be cured by the Prayers of the Pastors of the Church, and after being Anointed with Oyl, which was a Ceremony practised by the Order of *Christ* in those times, and by the Means whereof God wrought miraculous Cures. He speaks likewise of the Efficacy of Prayer, and of the Fruits of Brotherly Reproof.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been read, ought to be a Warning, I. To the Rich, since St. *James* threatens with the Curses of God all those rich Men that are Covetous, Unjust, and that make use of their Wealth to live in Pomp and Luxury; those

those to whom God has given Wealth, ought carefully to avoid Covetousness, Unjustice, and Pleasures, and to consider for that purpose, the Vanity of Riches, the Temptations to which they expose Men, and the terrible Misfortunes into which all those fall, who set their Heart upon them, or make a wrong Use of them. II. The Apostle shews, the Duty of Righteous Men when they are in Affliction; it is to suffer without Complaint and Murmuring, to wait with Patience till the Lord shall please to deliver them; to meditate continually upon the Sufferings of the Saints, and upon the happy issue which God is wont to grant them. III. This Chapter teaches us, that all vain and rash Oaths, let them be what they will, are absolutely forbid to Christians, as well as all hasty and wrathful Expressions. IV. We see that those who are afflicted, ought to seek for comfort in Prayer, and particularly, that sick Persons should call their Pastors to pray with them, and that the Confession of Sins and Prayer, when performed with zeal, are of great Weight in the Sight of God. We may learn from the last Words of this Epistle, that the Advices and Warnings which are given to those who live in Sin and Error, are of a very great Advantage, since thereby we deliver a Soul from Death, and even obtain from God the Forgiveness of our own Sins. God grant us the Grace to remember carefully these Instructions, and to observe them faithfully.



I. *St. Peter.*



HIS Epistle was writ to the Believers, as well among the dispersed *Jews*, as among the *Gentiles* that were in the Provinces of *Asia minor*; and it tends to confirm them in Faith and Holiness. It contains several very weighty Instructions, and is one of the finest Books in the New Testament.

C H A P. I.

ST. *Peter*, in this Chapter, praises God for having called Christians to Salvation by *Jesus Christ*. He says, that this hope of Salvation supported the Faithful, and even filled them with joy in the midst of Afflictions and Persecutions; and he shews them how happy they were to know Christ, and to be Witnesses of the Accomplishment of the Prophecies in his Gospel. II. He exhorts them, by divers Motives, to

to Holiness, and to a Life worthy of their Calling.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter, we are engaged to two principal Duties. I. To render fervent and continual Thanks to God for his having chosen us to Salvation; for his having given us, by the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, such a firm and glorious Hope of Immortality, and for having granted us the Happiness of knowing what was concealed from the ancient Prophets, and of seeing, in the Gospel, the Accomplishment of those Promises which the Prophets had made concerning the Coming of the Messiah, and the Redemption of Mankind. II. St. *Peter* teaches us, that all these glorious Advantages oblige us to lead a pure and holy Life. 'Tis what he exhorts us to, by representing that God has delivered us from the Ignorance and Corruption in which Men were involv'd when they knew not Christ; that as God, who has called us, is holy, we ought likewise to be holy in our whole Behaviour; that the God whom we invoke as a Father, is likewise our Judge, and will render to all of us according to our Works; that we have been redeemed and consecrated to God by the precious Blood of Christ. And, *Lastly*, that we have received a new Birth by the Preaching of the Gospel, which is the Word of the Living God, and remains for ever. These are powerful inducements to a holy and Christian Life; let us have them continually before our Eyes, and let us beseech God to render them efficacious in our Hearts, by the Power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

C H A P. II.

I. **S**T. *Peter* exhorts Christians to live in Innocence, to grow in the Knowledge and Grace of *Jesus Christ*, to cleave to Him more and more by Faith, and the Imitation of his Life, so that being united to Him, and among themselves, by Charity, they may altogether compose one Church, which might be as a Temple devoted to the Lord; to engage them to which, he sets before their Eyes on one Hand, the Unhappiness of Unbelievers who rejected Christ; and on the other, the incomparable Favour that God had done them, to choose them to be his People, and Persons consecrated to his Service and Glory. II. He exhorts them next, to renounce the Desires of the Flesh, and to edifie the *Gentiles* by their good Behaviour, and to submit themselves to Kings and Magistrates. He recommends to Christian Slaves, who served Heathen Masters, to be in subjection to them, and to bear with Patience whatever was uneasie in their Condition; upon which Occasion, he speaks of the Obligation Christians were under to imitate the Patience of *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn in this Chapter, I. That the Character of Christians, and of those who are truly Children of God, is Innocence, Meekness, Simplicity, Sincerity, and a real Aversion to Wickedness and Hypocrisie, and a continual Desire of Advancing in the Favour of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. II. We ought to make very serious Reflexions upon what St. *Peter* says here, that the Faithful are as so many living
Stones,

Stones, who compose a holy Temple, in which there be offer'd spiritual Sacrifices agreeable to God through *Jesus Christ*, and that the Church is an Assembly of chosen People, and a Kingdom of Priests. This engages us to consider carefully, the Glory of our Condition, and to acknowledge the great Goodness of God, in choosing us for his People, who were formerly miserable Heathens. This shews likewise, that Christians are Persons wholly consecrated to the Service and Glory of God. Let us therefore answer, as we ought, to a Calling so holy as ours is, by manifesting the Virtues of Him who has called us from Darkness to his marvellous Light. Let us on this Account, as *St. Peter* exhorts us, *Abstain from carnal Lusts, that war against the Soul*, remembering that we are *Strangers and Pilgrims here upon Earth*. Let us edifie all Men by a wise and innocent Behaviour; let us fear God; let us reverence and submit our selves to all our Superiours; and *Lastly*, let us let us suffer patiently all the Evils that may be brought upon us, and let us always set before our selves the Example of our Redeemer, who being never guilty of any Sin, did notwithstanding suffer with so wonderful a Patience; who, *when he was reviled, reviled not again*; and who has thereby left us an Example and a Pattern, that we should follow his Steps.

C H A P. III.

I. *ST. Peter* describes the Duty of Christian Women, and likewise shews that of Husbands towards their Wives. II. He exhorts all Christians to love one another, and to live in Peace and Innocency, representing to them that it is the Way to be happy, even in the midst of Persecutions. III. To engage Christians to suffer

fer patiently the Evils to which the Profession of the Gospel exposes them, he tells them what Christ had suffer'd to atone for the Sins of Mankind, and to bring to God the *Gentiles* and People who were in Bondage to Sin and Ignorance, but who, by coming into the Church by Baptism, and by being new Creatures, were saved, as *Noah* and his Family had been formerly in the Ark from the Flood.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **S**T. *Peter* exhorts Christian Women to be subject to their Husbands, to behave with great Meekness, to avoid Luxury and Immodesty in their Apparel, and to adorn themselves inwardly with a pure, gentle, and peaceful Spirit, which is of great Value in the sight of God; and he exhorts Husbands to love their Wives, and to behave with Prudence towards them. II. All Christians in general, are here excited to mutual Love, are taught never to wrong any Body, nor to revenge themselves, but to live in Peace with all the World. *St. Peter* tells us, after *David*, that this is the Way to render God propitious to us, and even to lead a more easie Life, to pacifie our Enemies, and to be happy when we are persecuted. III. We see in this Chapter, that one of the principal Duties of Christians is, to make a sincere Profession of Christianity, to keep a good Conscience, and to be always ready to give an account of our Faith with Meekness and Respect upon all Occasions that offer themselves. IV. Towards the end of this Chapter, *St. Peter* teaches us, that Christ suffered and rose again, to redeem Men from the Slavery of Sin; and that as *Noah* was formerly saved in the Ark, we are likewise saved

saved by Baptism, which procures us an admittance into the Church of God. This Doctrine teaches us, that we cannot attain to Salvation but by Faith in Christ; that it is necessary to make a publick Profession of that Faith in Baptism, but that Baptism is not sufficient to save us, if it be not accompanied with a pure Conscience. And *Lastly*, That those who obey not the Gospel, shall perish in their Unbelief, like the Inhabitants of the old World, who did not lay hold of the Patience and Forbearance of God, nor hearken to the Preaching of *Noah*, for which Reason, they perished in the Waters of the Flood.

C H A P. IV.

ST. *Peter* teaches in this Chapter, I. That the Sufferings of *Jesus Christ* oblige Christians to renounce the Errors in which they lived before their Conversion to the Christian Religion, and particularly, the impure and dissolute Life of the *Gentiles*, and to live in Sobriety and Godliness, waiting for the Coming of our Lord. II. That Christians ought above all Things to keep up great Charity among one another, and each one to employ, to the Glory of God, the different Gifts they have received from Him. III. That, far from being amazed and discouraged at the Sufferings they underwent for the Gospel, they should account them very Honourable; and that those who persecuted the Faithful, and opposed the Gospel, would not escape the righteous Judgment of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains several very wholesome Instructions. I. That the Consideration of what Christ suffer'd, engages us very strongly to renounce Sin, and the Desires of the Flesh, and particularly to avoid Impurity and Intemperance. II. That those who profess to fear God, ought not to think it strange if they be blamed by worldly Men for not living like them, nor be moved either by their Example or Contempt. III. The third Lesson is, always to set before our Eyes the last Coming of our Lord, to be prepared for it by a sober Life, by diligence in Prayer, and by the Practice of the Duties of Charity. IV. That we ought every one of us to make use of the different Talents we have received from God, whether they be temporal or spiritual, for his Glory, and for the Advantage of our Neighbour, and it is what they who have any Calling or Office in the Church are particularly obliged to. *Lastly*, St. Peter teaches us, that 'tis both Honourable and Joyous to suffer as a Christian; and that if the Faithful and Righteous are exposed to so many Evils, Unbelievers and wicked Men may expect much more terrible Punishments. This should encourage Christians to endure patiently, and even with Gladness, all the Evils which the Profession of the Gospel brings upon them from the Wicked; it should inspire all with a wholesome Fear, and excite us more and more to Piety, and a Life worthy our Calling, and of the Glory that is reserved for us in Heaven.

C H A P. V.

ST. *Peter* exhorts in this Chapter, I. Pastors to discharge their Duty. II. Young People to be in Submission to their Teachers, and to be humble. III. All Christians in general to live in Sobriety and Watchfulness, and to resist the Temptations of the Devil. IV. He concludes his Epistle by Wishes and Salutations.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter describes, I. The Duty of Pastors, and the glorious Reward they will receive from the Lord *Jesus*, if they faithfully discharge the Functions of their Ministry. This ought to engage those who are in that Office, to serve God with Integrity, to feed the Flocks of the Lord, to watch carefully over the Sheep with which they are intrusted, and to exercise their Charge, not with constraint, nor with a view of Pride or Interest, but with Affection and Willingness, and after such a manner, as to become Patterns to their Flocks. II. St. *Peter* advises young People, that submission to their Pastors belongs particularly to their Age; and all Christians in general may learn from hence, that Humility is one of the principal Virtues of Christianity, since *God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*. III. The Apostle puts us in mind, that we are exposed to the Temptations of the Devil, and to various Dangers, from which we can't be secured but by sobriety, by vigilance, and continuing stedfast in the Faith. Lastly, The Prayer with which St. *Peter* concludes this Chapter, teaches us, that the Christian

stian Profession, and the Hopes of eternal Glory, oblige us to aspire more and more to Perfection; and that the Means of Attaining thereto is, to trust in God, and to implore the continual Help of his Grace. Let us beg it, each of us for himself, and for one another; and let us beseech the God of all Grace, who has called us to his eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, to make us perfect, to stablish, strengthen, and settle us; to Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.





II. St. *PETER*.



T. Peter writ this Epistle a little before his Death, about the Year of *Christ* 64, to confirm the Faithful in the Purity of Doctrine and Practice of good Works, and to prevent their being led away by false Teachers, who to the Profession of Christianity joyned a carnal Life; and by prophane Persons, that called in question the second Coming of *Christ*. This is a most excellent Epistle as well as the foregoing, and is writ with great Strength and Majesty.

CHAP. I.

I. **S**T. *Peter* in this Chapter shews, that God having given us all that is necessary to live in Holiness, we ought to join to our Faith the Practice of Christian Virtues, and that this is the only Means to enter into the Kingdom of God. II. He next represents to the Faithful, that

that he exhorted them after this Manner, because he foresaw that he should be soon taken away from them by Death. III. And lastly, He proves the Truth of the Gospel, by the Transfiguration of *Jesus Christ*, and by the Prophecies of the Old Testament.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That since God of his Goodness and Power has furnished us with all things needful for a spiritual Life, and for Godliness, and since He has given us such excellent Promises, we shall be inexcusable if we do not renounce the Corruptions of the World, and if we do not live in Holiness. II. That we must joyn to Faith, Prudence, Temperance, Patience, Holiness, Brotherly Love, Charity, and all other Christian Virtues; and endeavour to confirm our Calling and Election by good Works, to the End that we may thereby secure an Entrance into the Kingdom of God; but he tells us farther, that those who neglect such Duties are Blind, and will perish in their Sins. III. The Care *St. Peter* took to warn Christians before his Death, shews that they who can be useful to their Neighbours, ought to endeavour it whilst they are in this World, and to double their Zeal, as their End draws nigh. IV. We see that *St. Peter* proves the Truth and Divinity of the Christian Doctrine, by the Testimony which he and his Companions had render'd, of that which happened to our Lord when He was Transfigured, and by the Prophecies of the Old-Testament. This obliges us seriously to attend to the said Proofs, and carefully to read and meditate the Gospel and Writings of the Apostles and the Prophets. As to the Prophecies, we should consider particularly, that they were formerly

obscure, and not easy to be explained, but that at present they are very clear, and very proper to confirm us in the Faith, and in our Obedience to the Doctrine and Precepts of *Jesus Christ* our Saviour.

C H A P. II.

I. **T**H E Apostle foretels that false Teachers should arise, who would introduce pernicious Sects and Doctrines; and he shews by the Punishment of the wicked Angels, by the Flood, and by the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, that those Deceivers, and they who followed them, should not remain unpunished. II. In the next Place, he describes these false Teachers, by saying that they were sensual Persons, and such as speak evil of the Powers; that they were Unclean, addicted to Covetousness, full of Pride, vain and deceitful in their Words, seducers of the Simple by their false Promises of Liberty; and he shews that they involved in the greatest Miseries all those that hearken'd to them, and that suffered themselves to be led away by their Discourses.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn from hence, I. That there were in all times, and always will be, false Teachers, who endeavour to introduce dangerous Doctrines, and to form Sects and Parties in the Church. Wherefore we must not be surprized, if the like should still happen; however, we ought to stand upon our Guard against such People, for fear of being misled by them. II. This Chapter shews us, that God has in all Ages display'd the Marks of his Justice; as it appears more particularly by the Punishment of the
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the rebellious Angels, by the Flood, and by the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. These Examples teach us, as the Apostle says, that *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to reserve the Unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, in the Lust of Unclean-ness, &c.* III. We are to give a particular Attention to the Characters by which the Apostle represents these false Teachers, telling us, that they are proud People, Enemies to Government, Covetous, vain in their Discourses, and above all, addicted to Sensuality and Pleasures: This shews us, that we ought to shun those in whom we find these Characters, as dangerous Persons, and that we ought chiefly to abominate all the Doctrines that have a Tendency to these Vices, and which sooth the Irregularity of our Manners. By which we may likewise perceive, that it is the Corruption of the Heart and of the Passions which commonly engage Men in Error. IV. Those to whom God has given Knowledge and Grace, ought to improve what they learn in this Chapter, namely, that when having received these Advantages, they suffer themselves to be overcome by the Pollutions of the World, their last Condition will be worse than the first; and that it were better for them never to have known the Way of Righteousness, than to turn aside from it after having known it. This is most wholesome advice, and such as ought to induce even good People to a Fear attended with Watchfulness and Precaution, and a strict Perseverance in Godliness.

C H A P. III.

I. **T**H E Apostle foretels that there should be in the Church profane Men, who
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would doubt of the second Coming of *Christ*, whom he confutes by saying, that as the World was formerly destroyed by the Waters of the Flood, it would likewise one Day perish by Fire; and that if the Coming of *Christ* were retarded, it was because God would give Men time to repent. II. He shews that the Belief and Expectation of the End of all Things, and the Hopes of being received into the World to come, oblige us to unwearied endeavours after Holiness and Perfection.

Reflexions after the Reading.

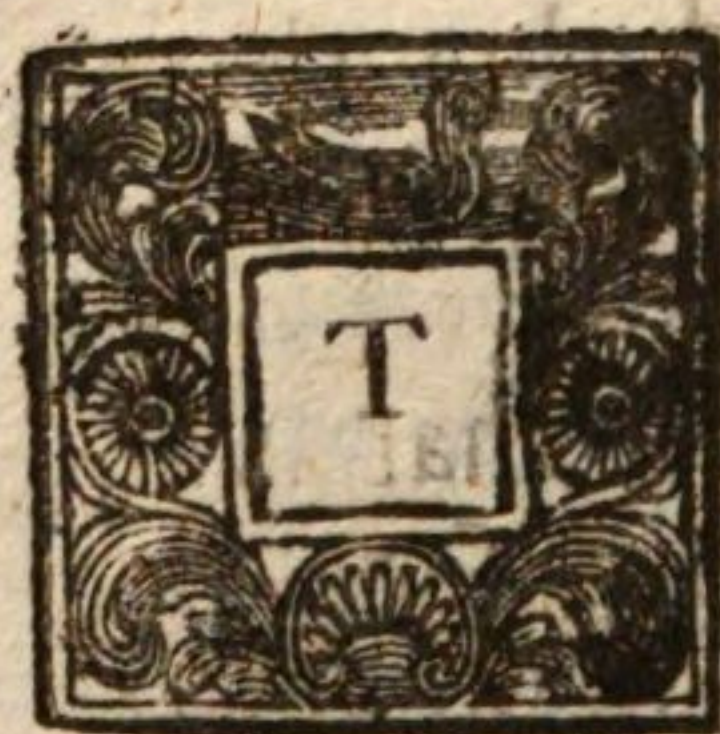
THIS Chapter treats, I. of the Coming of *Christ* and of the end of the World; and, II. of the Effect which this last Doctrine ought to produce in us. Upon the former of these Articles we ought to consider, that since it has been foretold, that there would be in the last Times Scoffers, who would deny the most certain and most important Truths of Religion, we ought not to be surprized if there be some in our Times, but wherever we find them, to shun them as the most dangerous and worst of Men. II. That it is likewise most certain, that the World must have an End, of which we have a sure Proof in the Flood, which is a Fact undeniably and universally acknowledged; and that if God delays this End of the World, and the last Judgment, 'tis through an Effect of his Goodness towards Men, and to allow them time to repent, which should excite us to lay hold of the Forbearance and Patience of the Lord. III. St *Peter* teaches us, that as the World was formerly destroyed by Water, it will be consumed at the last Day by Fire; and the Description which is here made of this End of the World, shews us what will be the Majesty and
Terror

Terror of the last Appearance of the Son of God. As for the Effect which this Doctrine should produce, the Apostle tells us, that since we know that this World is to be destroyed, and that there will be new Heavens and a new Earth, in which Righteousness will dwell, we cannot apply our selves with too great earnestness to a holy Life, and to perform Works of Piety, so as not to be surprized by that Day, and to be then found by the Lord without spot or blemish. Let us therefore never forget these Instructions; and *seeing we know these things before, let us beware lest we also be led away with the Error of the Wicked, and fall from our own Steadfastness. But let us grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: To whom be Glory both now and for ever. Amen.*





I. St. JOHN.



THE Design of this Epistle is, to secure Christians from being seduced by certain false Teachers, who denied that Christ was come in the Flesh, and that He was the Son of God, and who lived in Licentiousness. St. *John* establishes in this Epistle, the Truth of the Gospel, and the Necessity of believing in *Jesus Christ*, and of living in Holiness, and especially in Charity.

CHAP. I.

I. **T**HE Apostle teaches us in this Chapter, that neither he himself, nor the other Apostles, had preached any thing concerning Christ the Son of God, but what they had seen and heard themselves. II. He shews next, that the Aim and Substance of the Christian Doctrine is,

is, that as God is Light and Holiness it self, none but those who walk in Holiness, who sincerely confess their Sins, and forsake them, have any Communion with God and with Christ.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first Instruction we meet with in this Chapter, relates to the Truth of the Gospel, which appears by the certainty of the Evidence of the Apostles, who preached nothing but what they had seen, heard, and as it were touched with their Fingers. II. We observe here, that the Design of the Christian Religion is, to render Men like God by Holiness. St. *John* declares most expressly, that those who boast of being in the Communion of God, and *Jesus Christ*, and yet remain in Sin, are Liars, and do not act with sincerity; and that there are none but those who walk in the Light, that is to say, who lead a pure Life, that have Communion with God. III. He teaches, that as all Men were Sinners, and that God had sent his Son to save them, there was no other Means to partake of the Effects of the Mercy of God, and of the Efficacy of the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, than sincerely to confess and forsake their Sins.

C H A P. II.

ST. *John* teaches us in this Chapter, I. That Christ had attoned for our Sins; but that none but such as keep his Commandments, have any share in that Attonement. II. He says, that the chief Commandment of our Lord is, to love one another, and that those who do not love their Neighbour, are in Darkness and in Death. III. He extends his Exhortations to
Chri-

Christians of all Ages, but particularly to young People, recommending to them not to love the World. IV. He advises the Faithful not to suffer themselves to be seduced by Impostors and Antichrists, who denied that *Jesus* was the Christ, and the Son of God ; and that they should stedfastly retain the pure Doctrine, and the Truth which was taught them from the Beginning.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *John* teaches us here, I. That our Lord makes Intercession with God for us, and that He has attoned for the Sins of all Mankind ; but that the Token by which He owns those that believe in Him, and love Him, is, obedience to his Commands; and that the chief Duty of Christians is, to imitate their Saviour, and to live as He lived. II. That among the Commandments of Christ, that which has the first Place, and to which all the rest may be reduced, is the Love of our Neighbour ; that they in whom this Love is found, are in the Light, and there is no occasion of Stumbling in them ; but that those who do not love their Brother, are in Darkness, and in a State of Condemnation. III. The Apostle teaches us, that the Doctrine of Christ engages Christians of all Ages, and all Conditions, and particularly young Persons, to strengthen themselves more and more in the Love of God, and of *Jesus Christ*, and to renounce the Love of the World ; and that the Love of Riches, of Pleasures, and of Glory, is by no means consistent with the Love of God. This is what young People ought most seriously to consider of, in order to avoid the Temptations to which their Age exposes them, remembering for this purpose, that *the World passeth away,*

away, and the Lusts thereof; but he that doth the Will of God abideth for ever. IV. The Warnings St. John gives in this Chapter, to beware of those false Teachers that do not acknowledge Jesus for the Son of God, and for the Messiah, teach us, that we ought to shun all those who spread Doctrines contrary to the Gospel; that Faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary to Salvation; and that to the End we be not led away by Error, we ought inviolably to adhere to the Doctrine taught from the Beginning by Christ, and by the Apostles; But St. John informs us likewise at the same Time, that Faith in Christ engages us to live Righteously and Holy, to the End, that when He shall appear, we may have entire Confidence, and not be confounded by his Presence at his Coming.

C H A P. III.

IN this Chapter St. John speaks, I. Of the Love which God has shewn us in Adopting us for his Children, and of the Glory He has reserved for us. He says, II. That this Grace which God has granted us, obliges us to purifie our selves, and that the End of Christ's Coming, was to withdraw Men from Sin, and to render them Righteous and Holy. III. He treats particularly, about the Love of our Neighbour, he shews how necessary that Virtue is, as well as the Nature and Effects thereof, and he adds, that the surest Way to obtain Peace of Conscience is, to be filled with Confidence before God, and to Love one another sincerely.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which is one of the best in the Testament, engages us, I. To celebrate

celebrate the Love of God our Father, who has adopted us for his Children, and to consider carefully the Advantages of our Adoption, and the Glory with which the Children of God will be crowned at the Coming of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. II. The Apostle teaches us, that those who have such glorious Hopes purifie themselves. He declares in the strongest Manner, that *Christ* is come to abolish Sin; that therefore those who commit Sin, do not know Him to Salvation; that the infallible Token by which we distinguish the Children of God from the Children of the Devil is, that the Children of God do not live in Sin, and that those who do live and persevere in it, are the Children of the Devil. This is what all of us ought most seriously to reflect upon. III. We see here, that the Love of our Neighbour is the True Character of Christians, and that those in whom this Love is not found, and who hate their Brother, are Murderers like *Cain*, and remain under Condemnation, and in Death. IV. *St. John* instructs us concerning the Nature and Effects of true Charity, by saying, that it ought not only to consist in Words, but that it should be sincere and hearty, that it should incline us to assist our Brethren, and if it were necessary, even to lay down our Lives for them, as *Christ* gave his for us. Lastly, The Apostle teaches us, that it is by discharging these Duties that we shall be able to discover whether we are in the Truth and in the Love of God, and to have Peace of Conscience, and a firm Assurance of obtaining from Him whatsoever we ask of Him.

C H A P. IV.

ST. *John* advises Christians not to believe all kinds of Spirits, that is to say, all those who pretend to be inspired by the Spirit of God; but

but to try the Doctrines, to know whether they proceed from Him or not; and he lays down the following Rules for discovering the same: I. The *first* is, that those who don't confess that *Jesus Christ* came in the Flesh, and was the *Messiah*, ought to be rejected as People animated with the Spirit of the World, and with Error, but not with the Spirit of Truth. II. The *second* is, that Religion consists in Charity, which the Apostle proves by representing the greatness of the Love which God has shewn in giving us his Son; from whence he concludes, that those who are not animated by a Spirit of Charity, don't love God, nor belong to Him, and consequently ought not to be heard.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CHRISTIANS may learn from hence, I. Not to receive all kind of Doctrines, but to examine them, to know whether they come from God or not. II. That it is one of the fundamental Truths of Religion, to believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, and the Son of God, and that He was made Man for our Salvation. III. That Charity is the Abstract and Essence of Religion, and the chief Token of Christianity. 'Tis what St. *John* repeats divers Times, and what he establishes upon this Principle, that God is Charity it self, and upon the Love which He has made appear towards Men, by sending his Son to give them Life. By this we may discover, that Charity is entirely necessary, and that those who are void of it, do not know God as they should know Him, nor do any way belong to Him; this St. *John* declares most expressly. This likewise shews us, that in order to be excited to Charity, we should meditate upon the Nature and Perfections of God, who is all Love, and up-
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on that great Goodness He has manifested to us, in giving his Son to make an Attonement for our Sins; since God has thus first loved us, we ought to love Him most fervently, and to love one another, remembering what St. *John* said : *That if any one says he, loves God, and hates his Brother, he is a Liar.* Let us be therefore more and more confirmed in the Love of God and of Charity, to the End, that so bearing the Image of our heavenly Father, we may have Confidence at the Day of Judgment, and not be terrified at the Coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

C H A P. V.

I. **S**T. *John* continues to shew, that the true Children of God are known by the Purity of their Faith, by the Obedience they pay to his Commandments, and by Charity. II. He teaches that the Truth of the Gospel was confirmed from Heaven, by the Testimony of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and upon the Earth, by the Spirit, by Water, and by Blood, that is to say, by the divine Power with which Christ was invested, and which He has spread over the Apostles, and those that believe in Him; by the Purity and Holiness of his Life, and that of his Disciples, and by his Sufferings, as well as by those of the Martyrs. From whence he concludes, that the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Promises of eternal Life, which are made us there in *Jesus Christ*, ought to be received with a full certainty of Faith. III. St. *John* says, that those who had such Faith were sure of obtaining from God all they should ask of Him according to his Will, even the Health and Life of their Brethren, which at that

Time

Time, was another most convincing Proof of the Divinity of the Gospel, unless those for whom they should pray had committed certain Sins, which God thought fit to punish by a temporal Death. IV. The Apostle finishes this Epistle, by exhorting the Faithful to keep themselves pure, to continue steadfast in the Faith, and to avoid Idolatry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM this Reading we may gather, I. That none are the true Children of God, but those who believe in his Son, who love their Neighbour, and who keep his Commandments. II. That the Keeping of God's Commandments is not a difficult nor painful thing, but that, on the contrary, by the Help of the Love of God, and by Faith, we may easily overcome the World and Temptations. III. That since the Divinity of the Gospel has been confirmed after so authentic a manner in Heaven and upon Earth, we shall remain without excuse, if we don't receive its Doctrine as Divine and Heavenly, and if we don't observe the Duties it prescribes. IV. That those who do the Will of God, are sure to be heard by Him, and that their Prayers have great Efficacy, unless they should ask certain temporal Blessings, which He does not think fit to grant them; this is a most precious Advantage, and which ought most strongly to excite us to obey and love God. V. St. John tells us, that those who are Children of God do not sin, that the Wicked One has no Power over them, and

that they keep themselves pure, knowing that they belong to God, and that the whole World is in Sin and Corruption. Let us therefore endeavour after Purity and true Holiness, to the end, that by this means we may have saving Communion with God our Father, and his Son *Jesus Christ*, who is the true God, and Life eternal; to whom be Glory for ever.
Amen.



II. St. JOHN.



St. John writes this Epistle to a Christian Lady, and to the Church which was in her House; he exhorts her to persevere in the Truth, and in Charity, to shun false Teachers, and to have no Dealing with them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which is to be observed in this Epistle, for our Instruction, is, I. The Zeal and Piety of that Lady, to whom St. John writes. This is an Example which chiefly concerns Christian Women, and which teaches them to adhere to Godliness, and to cause it to reign in their Families, as the said Lady did, of whom St. John gives so advantageous a Testimony. II. We see here, that all those who know the Truth, and love it sincerely, do also

love one another heartily, and join to the Knowledge of Truth, Obedience to the Commandments of God, and to the Practice of Charity. III. St. *John* teaches us, that it is not enough to have begun well, but that we must persevere to the end, so as not to lose the Fruits of what we have done, but be qualified to receive a full Reward thereof. IV. The last Instruction shews, what we are to do with respect to those that teach false Doctrines, namely, not to receive them as Brethren and Christians, but to avoid their Company, and any Correspondence with them, and to depart and separate our selves from them, and from all others, who do not live according to the Precepts of the Gospel.



III. St. JOHN.



THIS Letter is directed to a Christian named *Gaius*. St. *John* praises the Zeal which this faithful Servant of God had for the Truth, and his great Charity. He recommends to him some Persons, who stood in need of Assistance. He complains of a certain Man named *Diotrephes*, who was an ambitious Person, and opposed St. *John*, and gives a good Character of *Demetrius*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Epistle we may observe, I. The tender Love St. *John* had for *Gaius*, on account of his Piety and Charity, and the great Joy he felt at seeing him in so good a State; this likewise shews, that the Ministers of the Lord do never conceive more sincere Pleasure, nor sweeter Comfort, than when they know

that those, whom they look upon as their Children, do walk in the Paths of Truth. II. The Example of *Gaius*, who received Believers and Strangers with so much heartiness, and whose Charity was of so good a Savour in the Church, should stir us up to do good to all our Brethren, and particularly such as flee, and are persecuted for the Gospel. III. What he says here of *Diotrephes*, who aspired at being the Chief, and even opposed St. *John* himself, shews, that great Evils may befall the Church, when there be Persons who refuse to submit to Order, and especially if there be ambitious Ministers, that Lord it over others. But, on the contrary, 'tis a great Happiness when the Ministers are humble and pious, and such as every Body will speak well of, as was *Demetrius*. IV. We should carefully attend to these Words of the Apostle: *Beloved, follow not that which is Evil, but that which is Good. He that doth good, is of God; but he that doth Evil, hath not seen God.* This is what distinguishes true Christians from Impostors and Deceivers, and 'tis by this likewise that we should examine our selves, and regulate our Behaviour.

St. *J. V. D. E.*



St. Jude.



I.



HIS Epistle was writ against Deceivers, and prophane Persons, that were slipp'd into the Church, against whom St. Jude denounces the Judgments of God. II. The Apostle re-

presents these Deceivers as carnal Men, and addicted to Impurity, Enemies of the Powers, and of all Order, Disobedient, Quarrellsome, Proud, vain in their Speeches, and Self-interested. III. To preserve the Believers from being seduced by such Persons, he puts them in Mind of the Prophecies of the Apostles, and exhorts them to continue in the Love of God by Faith and by Prayer; to endeavour to deliver from Error, those that were engaged therein; and for that purpose, to make use of Meekness towards some, and of a wholesome Rigour towards others; to be upon their own Guard against every thing that might defile them, or cause them to

fall into the Deviations of those false Teachers, and their Followers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH E Warnings which St. *Jude* gave formerly against the Prophane Persons of his Age, are not less necessary at present, since there are such a great Number of Libertines, who turn Religion and the Grace of God into Dissoluteness and Impiety, wherefore every one ought to be upon his Guard against such Persons. II. For this purpose, we ought carefully to observe the Description which St. *Jude* makes against those prophane Persons, and to learn from thence, particularly to avoid such, who either by their Opinions or Behaviour, manifest their Inclination to Impurity and Pollution, who, will not be in Subjection to the higher Powers, who are proud and vain, and make Religion subservient to their Interest. III. The Example of the Punishment which God formerly inflicted upon the rebellious Angels, and upon the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, who had given themselves up to the most infamous Pollutions; and the ancient Prophecy of *Enoch*, which St. *Jude* here relates, do all prove, that such Libertines and impious Persons shall not escape the Judgment of God, and that He will take a very severe Vengeance upon them. IV. St. *Jude* teaches us, that the Way to preserve our selves from being seduced by these prophane Persons is, to remember that Christ and the Apostles have warned us, that there will be many such in the last Times. For which purpose, we should read and meditate the sacred Writings, and to such Reading and Meditation, we should join Prayer and Watchfulness, as St. *Jude* exhorts

horts us by these admirable Expressions: *But ye, Beloved, building up your selves on your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your selves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life. Lastly, This Apostle informs us, that it is not sufficient to secure our selves from the Errors of prophane Persons, but that Charity requires, that we should endeavour to deliver others, who are engaged therein, making use, to that end, either of Gentleness or Severity, and of all other Methods that Prudence and Zeal may suggest to us,*



Revelations.



Revelations.



HIS Book is called the Apocalypse, or Revelation, because it contains the Revelations which God made to St. *John* in the Isle of *Patmos*, where he was banished. The three first Chapters relate to the Churches that were then establish'd in *Asia minor*, and the following shew what was to happen in the Church till the End of the World. In this Book there are some Places that are pretty clear ; but there are likewise Visions and Prophecies which are obscure, because they are not yet fulfilled ; for which reason we shall pass by some of the Chapters thereof.

CHAP. I.

I. **I**N this Chapter, St. *John* speaks of the Usefulness of the Prophecies that are contained in this Book. He wishes the Grace of God to the seven Churches of *Asia*, and foretels

tels the Coming of Christ. II. In the next Place, he relates a Vision, in which our Lord appeared to him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E Beginning of this Chapter teaches us, that the Reading and Meditating upon this Revelation is very profitable. Accordingly we ought to make a good Use of the things which it contains; and although we find in this Book some Prophecies that are hard to be understood, yet we may find great Benefit in the Reading it, as well upon the Account of the several Instructions it contains, as because of the Predictions in it, of which we have already seen the Meaning and the Accomplishment. II. The Prayers and Thanksgivings with which St. John begins to express the Sentiments that all true Believers ought to have, namely, to beg the Grace and Peace of God for themselves, and for all the Churches, and to render fervent and continual Thanks unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father. III. The Prophecy St. John makes of the Coming of Christ, shews, that the Design of this Book of the Revelation is, to warn Men of that Coming, which will be so comfortable to Believers, and so dreadful to the Wicked. IV. In this magnificent Appearance of our Lord, which is here related, we may observe chiefly, the Majesty of Jesus Christ, and the Care He takes of his Church; this is the Meaning of that Description which is here made of the Glory in which our Lord appeared to St. John, and of what he says, that the seven Candlesticks of Gold, in the midst of which was Christ, represented the seven Churches of Asia;

Asia; and that the seven Stars which He held in his right Hand, signified the Angels, that is, the Bishops and Pastors of those Churches. This teaches us, that *Christ* is in the midst of his Church, that He governs it, that He sees every thing that passes therein, and that the Pastors thereof are established there by his Authority. This ought to be a great inducement for Pastors, and all Christians, to rely upon *Christ*, to serve Him faithfully, as being always under his Eyes, and as knowing that He is the King, and supreme Pastor of the Church, and Judge of all Men.

CHAP. II. I.—II.

THIS part of the second Chapter of the Revelation contains two Epistles, which *St. John* writ by the Order of *Jesus Christ*. I. The first is directed to the Angel, that is to say, to the Bishop of the Church of *Ephesus*, and to all his Flock. Our Lord praises the Faith of that Church, but reproaches them of the Coldness and Abatement of their Charity, and threatens to take away their Candlestick, that is, to deprive them of the Preaching of the Gospel. II. The second Letter is directed to the Church of *Smyrna*. Our Lord commends her also, but foretels that she should be Persecuted, and exhorts her to Perseverance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**O benefit by this and the following Reading, it must be observed in general, that *Christ* says in these Letters to all the Churches: *I know thy Works*. Which teaches us, that the State of every Church is perfectly known to Him, and that he sees all the Good and Evil thereof.

thereof. II. That *Christ* repeats in all these Epistles the following Words: *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.* This warning denotes the Importance of the Things which St. *John* writ in these Epistles by the order of our Lord, and obliges us to listen very seriously to them. III. That at the End of each Epistle, our Lord makes glorious Promises to those that *overcome*, that is to say, to those that conquer Temptations, and persevere to the End in Faith and Obedience. Lastly, that the Threatnings which *Christ* makes in these Letters, to the Churches of *Asia* minor, were executed afterwards, as we see even at this Day, by the sad Condition to which those Churches, that were formerly so flourishing, are now reduced.

In the two Epistles which we have just read, we may observe, I. That *Christ* commends those two Churches for not suffering wicked Men to remain in them; by which we learn, that we must not suffer false Teachers in the Communion of the Church, such as were the *Nicolaitans*, of whom mention is made in the Letter to the Church of *Ephesus*. II. The Reproaches *Christ* makes this Church for having forsaken its first Charity, because of which he threatens to remove its Candlestick, shew that God withdraws his Protection from Churches that fall into Relaxation and Lukewarmness, especially in respect to Charity, and that He suffers them to be persecuted, and even destroyed, as it happened some Time after to the Church of *Ephesus*. III. We see in the Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that God does sometimes expose Christians to Persecution, but that it ought not to shake their Constancy since He does not abandon them, in those Trials, but bestows the Crown of Life upon those that are faithful to Him until Death.

C H A P. II. 12,—29.

WE have here two Epistles which *Christ* caused to be writ, one to the Church of *Pergamos*, and the other, to the Church of *Thyatira*. I. He praises the Faith and Constancy of the Church of *Pergamos*, and exhorts her not to endure those who retained the Doctrine of *Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans*; those were false Teachers, that drew away Christians to acts of Idolatry and Impurity. II. He gives the same Advice to the Church of *Thyatira*, and speaking of *Jezebel*, by whom he understands the same Seducers, he threatens them, and those that followed them too, with Destruction; and he exhorts this Church to persevere in the purity of the Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may make the four following Reflexions upon these two Epistles: I. *Christ* praises the Churches of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira* for their Steadiness under Persecution, which appeared particularly in the Martyrdom of *Antipas*; as also their Charity, and their Faith, and takes notice that their last Works exceeded their first. From thence we may gather, that that which renders Churches agreeable to the Lord, is Constancy in Affliction, Perseverance in Faith, and Progress in Piety and in good Works. II. We see that our Lord reproves these Churches for suffering among them false Prophets, who taught that it was lawful to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and who by their Doctrine and Example engaged Christians in Impurity, in Sensuality and Idolatry. These reproaches, which *Christ* repeats more than once, shew

shew that we ought not to tolerate in the Church such as corrupt the Purity of Faith and Manners by pernicious Doctrines, and particularly, those that live in Impurity, or entice others thereto; and that the Churches which suffer these Persons, and these Offences, do what is very disagreeable to *Christ*, and draw upon themselves his Indignation and Wrath. III. We observe in the Epistle to the Church of *Thyatira*, that God warns the false Teachers, and impious Persons, and gives them Time to repent; but that if they don't lay hold on his forbearance, He punishes them, and they who join with them are involved in the same Judgments. IV. Our Lord declares expressly here, that He will judge all those who suffer themselves to be led away by Error or Vice; but that He will gloriously reward those who remain Steadfast in their Obedience to Him. This is what the following Words, which are well worthy our Consideration, do signifie: *All the Churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the Reins and Hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your Works. — He that overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the End, to him will I give Power over the Nations: — Even as I received it of my Father.*

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Epistle to the Church of *Sardis*; *Christ* reproves her sharply, for having only the Name and Appearances of Christianity; He exhorts her to repentance; He threatens her; and promises his Favour to those Members of that Church, who had preserved themselves undefiled. II. The Epistle to the Church of *Philadelphia*. He praises her Zeal and Steadfastness, and makes her

her particular Promises of his Protection. III. The Epistle to the Church of *Laodicea*, our Lord reproves her for her Lukewarmness, and for the good Opinion she had of her self; He exhorts her to come out of this dangerous State, and improve his Corrections, and the Invitations to his Favour.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **I**N this Church of *Sardis*, which had the Appearance of Life, but was really dead, and in danger of being overwhelmed by the Judgments of God, we have the Picture of several Churches, that do only make a Shew of Christianity, and which are therefore likewise threatened to be deprived of the Love and Protection of *Jesus Christ*; but as there were at *Sardis*, some Persons who had kept themselves pure, and whom God was pleased to spare; we ought likewise to believe, that in this present general Corruption, there are likewise some Elect, that have kept themselves undefiled, and whom God will gloriously distinguish from wicked and false Christians. In the Epistle to the Church of *Philadelphia*, we must observe that our Lord praises her above all the Churches of *Asia*, promising to distinguish her, and secure her from those Evils with which the rest were threatened. This was also what happened; this Church having been spared when the rest were destroyed, and having subsisted even to our Days, in a pretty happy Condition. This is a very express Instance of the Favour and Protection of God over those Churches where Piety prevails. The Epistle to the Church of *Laodicea* teaches us, *first*, that Lukewarmness in Piety is altogether odious to the Lord, that He rejects Lukewarm and half Christians, and that

that we cannot please Him, but by a sincere and fervent Zeal. *Secondly*, That those who being corrupted and dissolute, think they are in a good State, are in a most dangerous one; and that in order to extricate themselves from it, they should learn to know themselves well, to have a lively Sense of their Misery, and to seek for a Cure in the Grace and Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. *Thirdly*, That God corrects those whom He loves, and that He does it to awaken their Zeal, and bring them to Repentance. *Fourthly*, That our Lord offers his Grace to Men, and invites them to Repentance with much Patience and Goodness, as He himself expresses it by these Words: *Behold, I stand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.* Let us be sensible of these Invitations which our charitable Redeemer makes us, and let us receive them with eagerness and gratitude, to the End we may enjoy his blessed Communion. The Lord grant us this Grace!

C H A P. IV.

I. **S**T. *John* here relates a Vision, in which God appeared to him, with the Characters and Marks of his Majesty. He also shews the Praises wherewith the Saints celebrate his Glory, and return Him Thanks.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE see in the Vision that is here related,
I. Tokens of the Glory and Majesty of God, which ought to inspire us with Sentiments of Reverence and Fear for the great God whom we adore; we likewise see here, the Glory

with which the Saints, who are represented by the Four and twenty Elders, and by the four Animals, are crown'd in Heaven. II. What is said in this Chapter, that the Saints, who were about the Throne of God, did continually praise Him Day and Night, and cast themselves down before Him, worshipping Him who liveth for ever, sets before our Eyes the Happiness which the Faithful shall enjoy one Day, and ought to stir us up to endeavour after the same. It likewise teaches us to discharge even now this Duty, which will then be the everlasting Employment of the Blessed; namely, to praise God, to render Him our Homage, and to say always, and with all our Heart; *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. — Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.*

CHAP. V.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Vision of the Book sealed with seven Seals, which could not be opened but by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and by the Lamb, that is to say, by Christ. II. A Song which the Saints pronounced in praise of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two Observations to be made upon this Chapter. I. That though we don't know exactly what is denoted by this Book sealed with seven Seals, yet that which is farther said, that no Body could open this Book but *Jesus Christ*, teaches us, that He knows all that is foretold in this Prophecy, and that it is

is He likewise who can give the Explication thereof, and who will bring about its Accomplishment; which obliges us to consider the Predictions of this Book with Reverence. II. We have in this Chapter, a noble Pattern of the Praises we should render to *Jesus Christ* our Redeemer, in that He has suffer'd Death for us, and in having redeemed us by his Blood. Let us therefore bless him for ever; let us join our Thanksgivings to those of Thousands of Angels, and of all the glorified Spirits, saying with them: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing. — Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

CHAP. VI. 9, — 17.

I. **S**T. *John* relates the Complaints of the Souls of the Martyrs, and that which was answer'd to them. II. He describes next, the Judgments of God upon the Wicked, and the Despair with which they will be overwhelmed when God shall come to punish them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H E first Instruction this Reading gives us is, that we must not think it hard nor strange if God suffers his Saints to be persecuted, or their Blood to be spilt; it appears from hence, that God deals thus with them for wise and just Reasons; that if He does not immediately revenge the Blood of his Servants, He will not fail to do it when the Number of their Brethren shall be accomplished; and that in the meantime the Souls of his Saints are pre-

served, and enjoy rest, in expectation of the Day of their final Deliverance, and of their Glory. II. We see here a lively Description of the Terror and Despair with which those who persecute the Faithful, and all the other Enemies of God, are seiz'd at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which is so pathetically described by these Words: *And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, — hid themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and said to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* Let these Expressions be often present to our Mind, to the End that they may retain us in a continual Fear, and that we may avoid this terrible Condemnation and Despair, which will one Day be the Portion of the Wicked, and of all the Enemies of our Lord.

C H A P. VII.

WE see two Things in this Chapter. I. God forbids the Angels of his Wrath to hurt his Elect. II. St. John represents here, the Happiness and Triumph of the Saints, and particularly of those that shall have suffered for Truth.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **T**H O' we do not know exactly to what the first Verses of this Chapter relate, yet we may gather from the Command which was given to the Angels, to do no harm to those Elect of God that were marked with his Seal, that God knows all his faithful Servants, that they

they are very dear to Him, and that He spares them when He spreads his Judgments over the Inhabitants of the Earth, and that He will skreen them from his Wrath at the last Day.

II. This Chapter represents, in a very moving Manner, the Triumph and Glory of the Blessed, and particularly of the Martyrs that shall have suffer'd for Christ; the Joy that shall be heap'd upon them after their Labours, and the Felicity which God reserves for them. St. John tells us, that they shall serve Him Day and Night in his Temple: and that He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. That they shall Hunger no more, neither Thirst any more, — For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters; and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes. Let us meditate upon these glorious Promises with a continual Application; and since the heavenly Felicity is destined not only for Martyrs, but all those that shall keep themselves pure in this World, and shall glorifie God by their Patience and Obedience, let us excite our selves more and more to Piety and Holiness, in the Hope of so great a Glory. God grant us this Grace!

CHAP. XII.

ST. John relates in this Chapter, I. The Vision he had of a Woman with Child, who represented the Church, and of a Dragon that would have devoured the Child of that Woman; by which, St. John says, we are to understand the Devil, who should make furious Attempts to destroy the Church, and the Believers. II. He relates afterwards the Victory which the good Angels obtained over the bad ones,

ones, the Praises which the Saints returned to God on that Account, and the Persecutions which the Devil was to raise against them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TH O' the Meaning of the Vision, contained in this Chapter, is not altogether known, yet we may gather from it that which follows, for our Edification, *viz.* I. That the Devil was to oppose the Church, and to endeavour its Destruction. II. That the Church would be in a State of Oppression for the Space of *Twelve Hundred and sixty Days, or three Years and a half.* This Term, which is mention'd more than once in this Book, denotes, if we take a Day for a Year, according to the Stile of the Prophecies, that these Times of Oppression, or the Kingdom of Antichrist, were to last *One Thousand, two Hundred and sixty Years.* III. We see in this Chapter, that the Attempts of Satan against the Church should not be able to prevail, and that he would at last be overcome by the Power of *Jesus Christ*; but that nevertheless God would permit that those who kept his Commandments, and retained the Testimony of our Saviour, should be persecuted for a Season. These Things were written to support the Faith of Believers in all Ages, and especially when they should be exposed to Persecution.

C H A P. XIV. 1,—13.

WH A T we are going to read, sets before our Eyes, I. The Joy and Happiness of the Faithful, and the Thanks which they will render to God when his Kingdom shall be perfectly

fectly establish'd, and that of Satan destroyed. II. The Fall of *Babylon*, that is to say, of the Kingdom of Antichrist, and the Punishment of those who shall have adhered to his Errors, and his Crimes. III. The Happiness of those who die in the Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. **W**HAT we are first to consider upon this Chapter is, that St. *John* said, that he saw a Multitude of the Elect of God waiting upon him, and singing a new Song before his Throne ; but that none could sing this Song, save those who had not defiled themselves, who had followed the Lamb, and in whom no guile was to be found. This teaches us, that the Happiness of the Saints will be infinite, and that they shall be continually with God ; but that none will be admitted to the Communion of the Blessed, but those who shall have kept themselves pure, and have renounced themselves, carrying their Cross, and constantly following Christ their Saviour. II. We learn from hence, that the Time will come, when spiritual *Babylon*, which signifies the Kingdom of Antichrist, shall be destroyed, with all those that shall have partaken of its Idolatries and Crimes, and that the Punishment of the Enemies of the Church, of the Apostates, and of the Wicked, shall last for ever and ever. III. We have here a very positive Declaration, by which we learn, that those who die in the Lord are blessed, that they rest from their Labours, and that their Works do follow them. These assurances which the Spirit of God gives us, of the happy State of Believers after their Death, should stir us up to a holy Life, to the end we

may look upon Death with boldness, and that living to the Lord we may likewise die to Him. God grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVII.

THIS Chapter contains a Prophecy concerning the great Whore, and of mystical *Babylon*, and concerning the Destruction of the said Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Explanation given at the End of this Chapter, of the Vision which is there related, may serve to discover the meaning of it, the Spirit of God saying expressly, that the great Whore had her Rule in the City, which stood upon seven Mountains, and reigned over the Kings of the Earth; by which it is plain that we are to understand *Rome*. If to this we join the Description which is here made of the Kingdom of that great Whore, the Characters given to her, *viz.* Idolatry, Corruption of Manners, Tyranny, Cruelty and Persecution against the Saints, and that she would seduce Nations and Kings; all these things agree so well to what has been seen for several Centuries in the Church, and to the Condition in which Religion was found during those Ages of Ignorance and Corruption, that we cannot forbear applying this Prophecy to those Times. These Reflexions engage all such as God has enlightened with a Knowledge of the Truth, and that have the Liberty of worshipping Him according to the pure Light of the Gospel, to render Him their most hearty Thanks for the same. It ought likewise to confirm us in the Profession and Love of Truth, make us wait with Assurance

rance for the entire Destruction of the Kingdom of Sin and Error, and strongly excite us to a pure and Christian Life; since it would be of no Use to have a Belief conformable to the Gospel, and to make a free Profession thereof, if we remain engaged in Impurity, and the Pollutions of the World.

CHAP. XIX.

ST. *John* describes in this Chapter the Joy which the Saints will conceive when mystical *Babylon* shall be destroyed, and when God shall have established his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have now read, teaches us, that God will destroy the Kingdom of Antichrist and of mystical *Babylon*, that He will strip it of all its Glory, and that He will revenge the Blood of the Faithful which she shall have spilt, and punish her for all her other Crimes. We see likewise in this Chapter, how great will then be the Joy and Triumph of the Saints, and the Praises they shall render to God, for his having perfectly established his Kingdom. Tho' these Prophecies are not yet fulfilled, they may serve for the Comfort and Confirmation of our Faith, whilst we wait for the Accomplishment of these glorious Events, and make us aspire to that Glory and Felicity wherewith all the Elect of God shall be Crowned in Heaven. Lastly, They oblige us to consider, that it will not be only those who have adher'd to Error and Idolatry, or who have forsaken and persecuted the Truth, that shall taste of the divine Vengeance, and be cast into the Lake of Fire; but that it will likewise be the Portion of

of all those who shall not have obeyed the Truth, but shall have suffer'd themselves to be led away by the World, and by the Corruption that reigns therein. As for the rest, that which is observed in the tenth Verse, when St. John cast himself at the Feet of the Angel who spoke to him, viz. that the Angel said: *See thou do it not: I am thy Fellow Servant, and of thy Brethren that have the Testimony of Jesus: Worship God.* This, I say, teaches us, that we are not in any manner whatsoever to worship any other Being but God; and that therefore the religious Adoration that should be paid to Saints or Angels would be exceeding criminal.

CHAP. XX.

THIS Chapter has two Parts. I. In the former, St. John foretels that Satan shall be bound, and that Christ shall reign with the Saints and Martyrs a *Thousand Years*. II. In the latter, he speaks of the last Judgment.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we have two very remarkable Prophecies. I. The first is, that Satan should be bound for the Space of a *Thousand Years*, and that then our Lord would reign gloriously with the Martyrs. Now, tho' we do not well know the whole Meaning of this Prophecy, yet we may infer in general, that there will be a Time when the Church shall enjoy Rest, and shall be more pure and holy than she has ever been, and that then the Saints, and especially the Martyrs, shall be crowned with a singular Glory. This will probably come to pass when all Nations being converted, and the Kingdom of Antichrist destroyed, the
Lord

Lord shall reign gloriously in his Church. After which, Satan shall be bound, and the Church shall undergo some Persecution before the World be at an end. II. The second Prophecy relates to the last Judgment. We see by what St. *John* says of it, the Majesty in which Christ will appear at that Day, the general Resurrection of all Men, their standing before the Throne of our Lord, who will judge all according to their Works, and the Issue of his Judgment, viz. that the Wicked shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. These great Truths ought to be always present to our Mind, and engage us to pray, and to labour continually at our Advancement in Piety, to the end, that at that Day, so formidable to the Wicked, we may appear before our Lord with Confidence, and our Names be found in the Book of Life.

CHAP. XXI.

I. **S**T. *John* does here describe the Renovation of all Things, which will be at the End of the World, the Joy prepared for the Righteous, and the Punishments which are reserved for the Wicked. II. He represents next, in figurative Terms, and by magnificent Images, the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, the Glory of the celestial Kingdom, and the eternal Happiness of the Elect.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Description St. *John* makes of the new *Jerusalem*, teaches us, that at the End of Ages, all things will be renewed, and that then the Kingdom of God, and of his Saints, will appear in all its Glory; and we may judge by the great and splendid Types which the Spirit
of

of God makes use of in this Chapter, what will be the Beauty and Pomp of that glorious Establishment, to which the Saints shall be admitted, where God will dwell with them, where He will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and where He himself will be their Glory and their Happiness. This ought to excite in us ardent Desires to be of the Number of those that shall be received into the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; and since it is written, that no polluted Thing shall ever enter therein, and that the Portion of Unbelievers, of Cowards, of unclean Persons, of Murderers, of Idolaters, of Liars, and of other Sinners, shall be the Lake burning with Fire and Brimstone; let us with great Zeal set about purifying our selves, to the end that we may be thought worthy to be admitted into Heaven, to contemplate the Beauties thereof, and to be put in Possession of that supream Beatitude, of which we have a Picture in the Chapter we have just now read. God grant us all this Grace!

Amen.

CHAP. XXII.

I. **S**T. *John* continues to describe the Glory and Blessedness of the Life to come. II. He confirms the Truth of the Prophecies contained in this Book, and relates the Command which the Angel had given him to publish them. III. He says that Christ would come quickly to receive the Saints into his Glory, and to punish the Wicked, and shews the earnestness wherewith the Faithful wait for this last Coming of their Saviour.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which is the last of the *Revelations*, and of all the holy Writings, sets before our Eyes, the End and Consummation of all Things. We see here, how great will be the Glory and Happiness which the Saints shall enjoy everlastingly in the Presence of God, and of *Jesus Christ* their Saviour; and we may also learn here, that none will be admitted to this Happiness but those who endeavour after it, and who keep the Commandments of God; but that the Impure shall be excluded from thence for ever. Thus we see what will be one Day the Lot of good and bad Men, and what God proposes to do at the End of the World. Since He has so expressly warned us thereof, let us be continually meditating upon it, let us remember, that all these Things are most certain, and that God vouchsafed to reveal them to *St. John*, to the end that they might be written in this Book, for the Instruction and Edification of the Church in all Ages; and upon what the Angel said to *St. John*, let us consider, that these Truths do not produce the same Effects upon all kind of Persons; that the Wicked are corrupt and defiled daily more and more, whilst the Righteous and the Saints are continually improving themselves; but that the Lord will come to judge them all, as He himself has declared at the End of this Book, saying: *Behold, I come quickly; and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work shall be.* Let us continually pant after this Coming, and let us say with the Bride, which is the Church, and with all her true Children, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

Here

Here Ends the New-Testament.

God grant us the Grace to make a good Use of all that we have here read and heard, to meditate upon it, and to practise it our whole Lives, to the Glory of God our Father, and to the Advancement of our own Salvation.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with us all. Amen.

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